

The Atlantic

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

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Some say
the population
bomb is
a dud, but
should
we disarm it
anyway?

by
CHARLES C. MANN

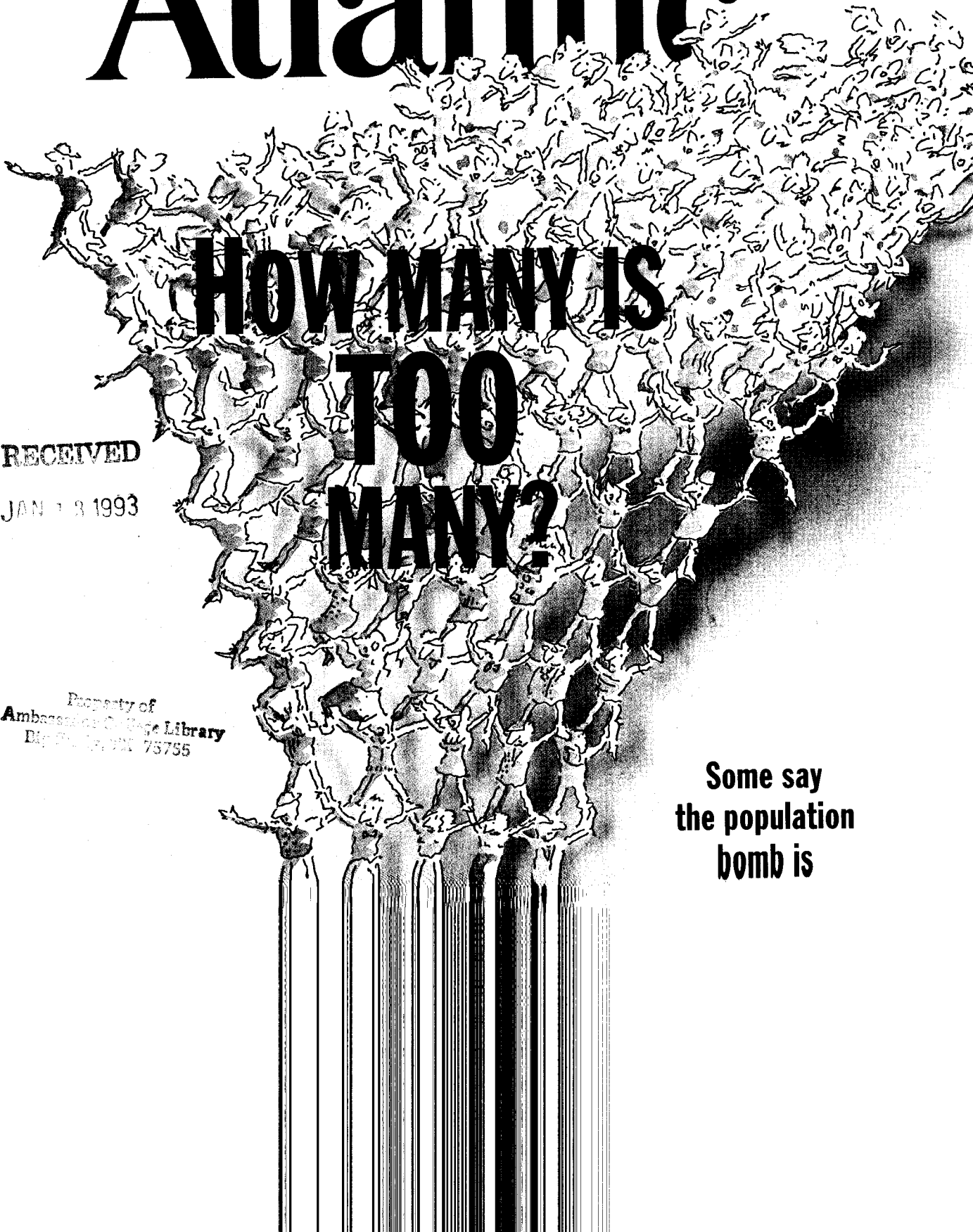
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The Atlantic



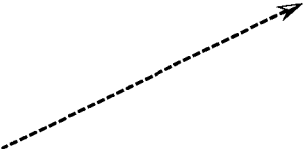
**HOW MANY IS
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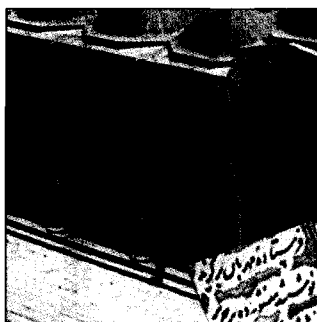


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by CHARLES C. MANN

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In considering foreign policy, the new President must maintain a resolutely domestic focus. "A domestic focus is imperative," the author writes, "not in order to rebuild the foundation for American world leadership but to prepare America for a world that cannot be led or stabilized or organized or managed in any meaningful sense of those words."

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R. O. Blechman*

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745 BOY STREET

SOON AFTER THE election of a new American President the editors of *Burke's Peerage* set out to establish his precise degree of relationship to the reigning English monarch—the link, it seems, always turning out to be an evening of Plantagenet incandescence in a Yorkshire loft. If *Burke's* can get away with that sort of thing, then surely *The Atlantic Monthly* can hail the new *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition*, as a distant cousin. The dictionary's executive editor, Anne H. Soukhanov, writes the magazine's Word Watch column, which appears every other month (see page 120). The chairman of the dictionary's usage panel, Geoffrey Nunberg, of Stanford University, has been an *Atlantic* contributor (see "The Decline of Grammar," which was the cover story in December of 1983), and a dozen other *Atlantic* writers and editors are members of the usage panel. Craig M. Carver, who writes Word Histories, the column that alternates in these pages with Word Watch, was the dictionary's consultant on matters of dialect.

AHD III, as the dictionary is familiarly known, has many admirable qualities. The design is elegant and accessible, the typefaces are clean and easy to read, and the text is enlivened with thousands of diverting, often wittily chosen illustrations: photographs, line drawings, maps. On almost every page is a brisk mini-essay relating to some word—a

note on history or usage, on regional variation, on synonyms and antonyms.

But the heart of any dictionary is the definition of words, and here lies *AHD III*'s greatest strength. A serious drawback of many dictionaries is the hobbling interdependence of the definitions, which, rather than being coherent and self-contained units, may send one chasing after cross-references in pursuit of meaning. Do you want to know what "clear" means? See BRIGHT. LUMINOUS. CLOUDLESS. All right then, what about "bright"? Proceed to SHINING. SPARKLING. SUNNY. In contrast, *AHD III*'s entry for "clear" begins like this:

1. Free from clouds, mist, or haze: *a clear day*. 2. Free from what dims, obscures, or darkens; unclouded: *clear water; bright, clear colors*. 3. Free from flaw, blemish, or impurity: *a clear, perfect diamond; a clear record with the police*.

And so on, through the remaining thirty or so definitions. It is impossible, of course, to avoid interdependence entirely, and *AHD III* does use cross-references. Its definitions, though, are the friendliest and most graceful you are likely to find.

Some relatives, as everyone knows, can be maddening. But *AHD III* is one we're always glad to see. And, as it happens, we see it every day.
—THE EDITORS

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*As Jim philosophized about
women, I continued to sip my
Baileys and coffee and read.
Between
the lines.*



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What we know about getting money for your kid's college education is an education in itself.

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Now, we won't waste your time explaining what "swaps" are and how they work. That would take an ad twice as long as this.

But we will tell you that the money we raise through such financial transactions is used to fund something critically important to us all—higher education in America.

Which is what Sallie Mae is all about.

Where the money comes from.

Okay, so what does all this complex financial stuff have to do with higher education, or,

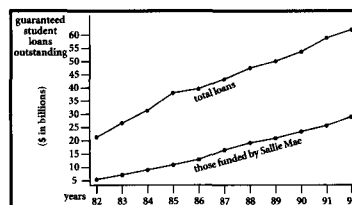
to put it in even broader terms, post-secondary education?

It helps make getting money for college easier.

Let's say your kid wants to study international finance. Excellent choice.

So he or she gets one of those guaranteed student loans.

Contrary to popular belief, that loan is not funded by the government; it's insured by it, in much the same way the FHA insures a lot of mortgages.



All guaranteed student loans are funded with private capital.

And, in over a third of the cases, the source of that private

capital is Sallie Mae.

At Sallie Mae, we use all the financial savvy available—like using the “swaps” shown above—to provide money for higher education.

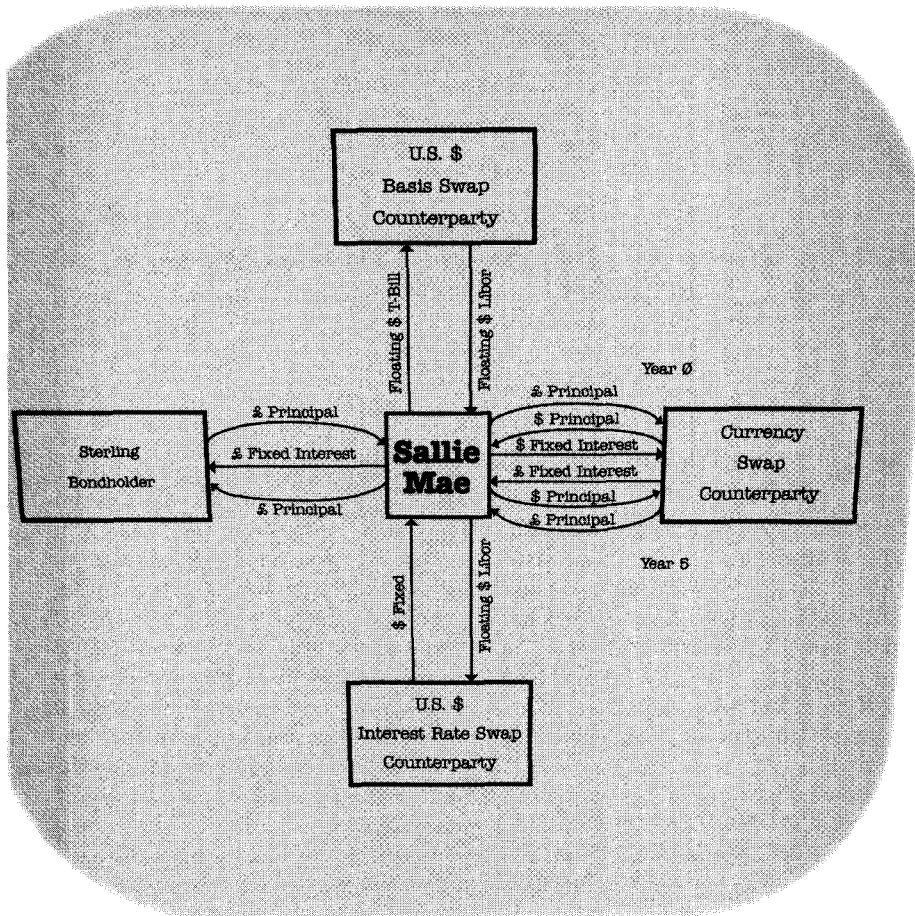
Which, in turn, makes it possible for your kid to get a student loan whenever he or she needs one.

Where the money goes.

We don't lend directly to students or parents. But they do benefit directly.

Working with banks, state higher education authorities, guarantors, and schools, we financed some \$9 billion of the \$80 billion students and their families paid for higher education in 1991-92.

Most of our financing is for student loans. But we also



financial talent in the world.

How the money is made.

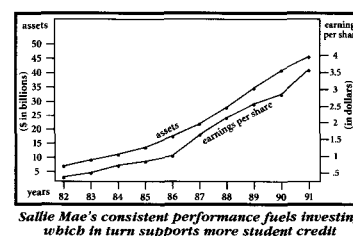
It doesn't take a Ph.D. in finance to know that money doesn't grow on trees. But money does grow. And few companies have been growing it as intelligently and prudently as ours.

We have nearly \$50 billion in assets.

We're one of just a handful of financial services companies in the country to have a AAA balance sheet.

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All of which attracts some of the smartest private capital investors in the world to invest in Sallie Mae.



And that money finances higher education right here. In America.

No matter what America's future education finance needs will be, Sallie Mae will continue to focus the full power of private capital markets on meeting them.

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provide funds for loans to parents who are putting their kids through college. And Health Education Assistance Loans for prospective health care professionals.

Even people who tap into their home equity or take out personal loans for college may be using funds provided by Sallie Mae.

All told, more than 6.5 million borrowers rely on Sallie Mae for loans to finance every kind of education. At schools all across the country.

Some students need money for just one or two semesters.

Some are going to trade school.

Some are getting their master's or doctoral degrees.

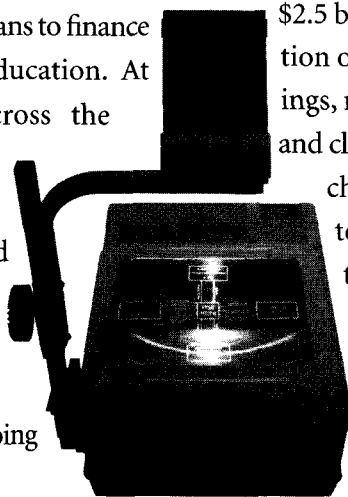
Post-Secondary Education Costs Borne By Students And Families In 1991-92

- \$80 billion total
- \$9 billion through Sallie Mae

And others are learning new workplace skills at their community college.

Sallie Mae also helps schools. Some 200 colleges in 38 states have received nearly \$2.5 billion for the construction or renovation of buildings, research labs, libraries, and classrooms. And to purchase essential teaching tools like computers, telescopes, even pianos.

With so many people and institutions depending on us for funds, we employ some of the best



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



FEMINISTS AND FREE SPEECH

Like others who warn the readers of thoughtful magazines about the dangers of censorious feminists, Wendy Kaminer ("Feminists Against the First Amendment," November *Atlantic*) is right about the obvious threat to free expression, but silent about a subtler way in which important speech can be "chilled."

Kaminer is correct to point out the dangers of the McConnell Bill (Senate Bill 1521, the Pornography Victims' Compensation Act of 1992). The chilling effect on distributors of magazines would be substantial. But more important, even if the correct distributors can be found, convicted of obscenity independent of a particular sex crime (the Brown-Grassley substitute for S. 1521), and then sued for contributing to a sex crime, this "blame-the-third-party" approach avoids the real harm of pornography in particular and obscenity in general: namely, the imposition of obscene sexual material on captive audiences, particularly in the workplace.

The imposition of such materials in the workplace can be and has been used to harass employees such that they cannot perform their duties or are otherwise intimidated and fail to participate fully and openly in discussions about important aspects of their jobs. In *Robinson v. Jacksonville Shipyards Inc.*, Lois Robinson, with the assistance of the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, has won in federal district court her case claiming that the open display of obscene sexual materials in the shipyard in which she was a welder made the workplace a discriminatory, "hostile environment." Would Wendy Kaminer have had NOW avoid this pornography minefield? If so, on what grounds?

The choice is not between educating men and women about the myths about rape and censoring materials that on their face seem to promote such myths. Rather, the choice is to fit the response

to the logic of the phenomenon at hand. In the case of rape, Wendy Kaminer's suggestions are fitting: namely, to attack the behavior legally and the bad attitudes socially. But in the case of the proximate use of a "free expression" claim to shield certain persons' harassment or intimidation of a co-worker, the logic of the case demands the right to sue those alienating one from one's reasonable work environment for their intentional actions and the proximate effects thereof.

Whereas the blame-the-third-party approach mistakenly brings a non-speech issue into the purview of First Amendment law, the "captive-audience" approach is a speech issue and hence properly debated in light of First Amendment principles. The NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund is surely one group that should help articulate what is and is not "reasonable" to endure in the workplace.

MARK G. ROBECK
Chicago, Ill.

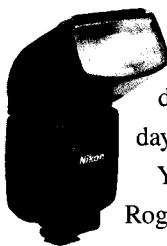
Thanks to Wendy Kaminer for showing how anti-pornography campaigns tend to personify men as the brutes and bad boys of sex. The notion that some man is going to look at a dirty movie, get aroused, and proceed to attack or degrade a woman is, to say the least, naive, and more aptly described as offensive to men. Just how many men are vulgar barroom cowboys—50 percent? 100 percent? Anti-porn campaigns do little better than smear sex and condemn men—at any cost.

Several studies have shown that most pornography is nonviolent. A study by Stephen Prince in the summer, 1990, *Journal of Film and Video* indicated that men tend to be the anonymous sexual beings, women are generally depicted as experiencing pleasure, and forms of brutality such as knifings and shootings are for the most part absent or unrelated to the sex scenes. Many writers start out with the

A query, if we may.

How do you get a vision that's in your head onto a piece of film not much larger than your average postage stamp?

No, this is not a trick question.



It's what photographers challenge themselves with day and night. In this case: day. Barely.

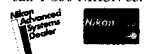
SB-25 with D-type AF Nikkors offers 3D Multi-Sensor Balanced Fill Flash. Also has Slow/Rear Sync, Red Eye Reduction, and FP Flash-Sync up to 1/4000th.

You see, pro photographer Roger Ressmeyer knew the sun was setting and lighting conditions were changing rapidly. He knew the windsurfer was moving erratically. He knew he only had an instant, or less, to get it. He knew it was almost impossible.

He knew, however, that he had the new Nikon N90. A camera designed to let you walk away with shots from situations you would ordinarily walk away from.

The Nikon N90 has Advanced 8-segment Matrix Metering, with powerful software which analyzes

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exposure instantly and accurately even in difficult light situations. Instances when you have no time to think, let alone meter. With

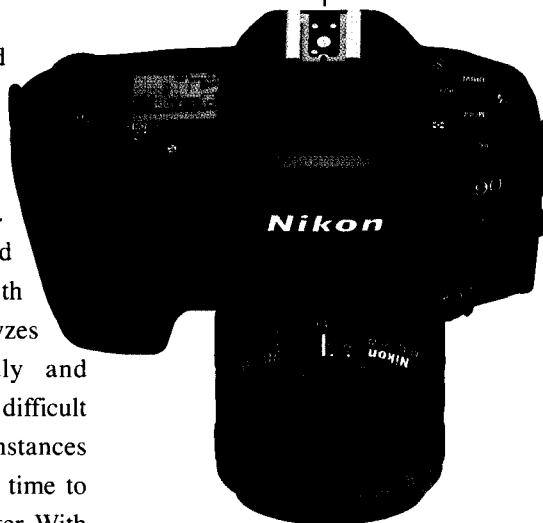
our new D-type AF Nikkor lenses, which actually incorporate subject distance information into the exposure, Matrix Metering moves into a new dimension. Quite literally. It becomes 3D Matrix Metering.

The N90 even knows when you've recomposed. It compares the lighting patterns from your original composition to those in your new one. That way, what you see will be perfectly exposed on film. Ask Roger.

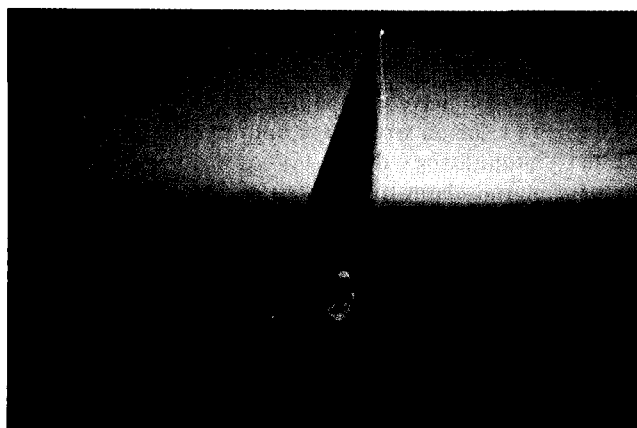
Imagine the same technology in flash photography. By way of the world's only 5-segment TTL flash sensor, the Nikon N90 used

It's designed to make the most of an invaluable piece of equipment you already have.

Your eye.



{The Nikon N90 System.}



You would imagine that shooting a moving windsurfer at dusk from a rocking boat would be sheer hell. But with the N90's innovative 3D Matrix Metering, CAM 246 Wide-Area Autofocus, Multi-Sensor TTL Flash with the new SB-25 Speedlight, and a 35-70mm f/2.8 D-type AF Nikkor lens, Roger Ressmeyer made the experience pure paradise. Then again, he was shooting in Hawaii.

with our SB-25 Speedlight can perform Matrix-like analysis of the scene with Monitor Pre-Flash for ideal flash output. So you can get shots you would never have dreamed of trying before. A severely backlit portrait. A bride in white, running through a shower of rice as the sun sets.

The Nikon N90's new advanced CAM 246 Autofocus Detection System focuses accurately in an instant. It has a Wide-Area Focus Detection Sensor that's nearly 20% of the frame width, for more creative composition, even if the subject is off center or moving. Like a windsurfer at 20 knots for instance.

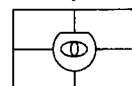
And what's more, with the Nikon Data Link System, you can connect the new Nikon N90 to a Sharp® Electronic Organizer, so you can control the camera remotely and customize operations for the way you like to shoot.

Yet another accessory with creative features is the MF-26 Multi-Control Back. With it you can auto-bracket ambient exposure, and auto-bracket flash output, among other things. So that you can rest assured you've got the shot.

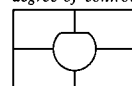
Combined with this new technology, there is a solid connection to Nikon's past. Our timeless F-bayonet mount accepts nearly 80 Nikkor lenses. Including our new D-type AF Nikkors and high-speed AF-I Nikkors.

Of course there's one thing this camera can't give you. The vision inside your head. The idea that sparks a feeling. The thought that provokes an inquiry. The brainchild that makes someone say "man, what a picture."

That's up to you. Question is, which photographic tool are you going to choose to turn that vision into reality?



With an 8-segment ambient Matrix Meter, remarkably powerful Nikon software, as well as the world's first five-segment TTL flash sensor, the N90™ provides you with an unprecedented degree of control.



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assumption that porn is automatically degrading, but when more-objective eyes view the material, the degradation isn't there.

ROBERT GAINES
New Orleans, La.

As a woman temporarily disempowered by poverty, I thank Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon for their efforts in my behalf. I suppose I am an exception, since women like me were not represented in Wendy Kaminer's article. Putting food on the table each day is a struggle but does not compare to my concern over the effects on my children of our "pornographic culture," as Kaminer so eloquently phrases it. I am not sure that censorship is the answer; I, like Patricia Ireland, hold out hope that human exploitation will become socially unacceptable. One of the best ways to achieve this goal is to stimulate discussion on the subject at all levels. That the First Amendment must be threatened before anyone listens or talks is unfortunate, but not surprising.

MARISA JONES
Moriarty, N.M.

Why should we subscribe to transitory definitions regarding "contemporary community standards" when we can embrace one simple rule for now and all time: in the words of Aldous Huxley, "Let every man be his own censor"?

CHRISTINA M. MAZZOLA
Washington, D.C.

The New Censors, like Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, are wolves in wolves' clothing. They are protégées of Herbert Marcuse, whose 1965 essay "Repressive Tolerance" insisted that "certain things cannot be said, certain ideas cannot be expressed, certain policies cannot be proposed, certain behavior cannot be permitted without making tolerance an instrument for the continuance of servitude."

In rejecting the Indianapolis pornography ordinance promoted by MacKinnon and Dworkin, a federal appellate court wisely pointed out that "much speech is dangerous." The court continued, "Chemists whose work might help someone build a bomb, political theorists whose papers might start political movements that lead to riots,

speakers whose ideas attract violent protesters, all those and more leave loss in their wake."

Punishing people for explicit or violent sexual images because of a questionable link to rape and assault not only violates the First Amendment but also threatens all manner of artistic expression that might be accused of inciting violence. No woman is safer because a book or movie is censored. Feminists for Free Expression, led by Betty Friedan, Judy Blume, Nora Ephron, Erica Jong, and Susan Isaacs, point out that "violence is caused by deeply rooted economic, family, psychological, and political factors, and it is these that need addressing."

When it comes to the enigmas of sex and violence, we need more speech, not less.

STEPHEN ROHDE
Los Angeles, Calif.

Radical feminists and right-wingers support a ban on pornography, but for very different reasons. Feminists think that banning pornography would help overthrow patriarchy. Right-wingers are convinced that such a ban would bolster male domination by keeping sex under control and within male-dominated marriage. I strongly suspect, with the right, that sexual censorship works mainly to keep women under male control.

LES BRUNSWICK
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Wendy Kaminer replies:

Whether and when sexist or racist speech in the workplace is a form of harassment is a hard question for civil libertarians, as Mark Robeck suggests; it involves a conflict of rights—the free-speech rights of some workers and the equality rights of others. (I'm using the term "rights" loosely; employees don't actually have First Amendment rights in relation to private employers, although they do, in my view, have a moral claim to free expression.) I'm generally opposed to prohibitions on hate speech (such as speech codes on campus), but I may surprise Mr. Robeck by agreeing that restrictions on speech in the workplace are sometimes warranted when the speech creates what the Supreme Court has recognized as a hostile environment. Prohibiting the circulation of pornography in the workplace is a relatively insignificant burden

on speech, while not prohibiting it can be a substantial barrier to workplace equality.

Of course, stating the principle favoring workplace equality merely begs the question: How do we objectively determine when sexual equality is threatened by sexist speech? (And what exactly is sexist speech anyway?) I don't believe we should allow the self-proclaimed victims of harassment to define the crime, according to their particular sensibilities. Not every woman who is offended by a remark should be deemed to have been harassed. If men tell sexist jokes within earshot of their female colleagues, are they guilty of harassment? Should a male worker be permitted to display a *Playboy* centerfold in his office? If you instinctively answer yes to the latter question, as I do, consider this: What if the male is a personnel manager responsible for interviewing prospective female employees? What if his office is decorated with racist graffiti as well?

Whether or not workplace equality is threatened by speech is less a matter of principle than of circumstance. Consider the Jacksonville Shipyard case, which Mr. Robeck mentions. It was a relatively easy case on the facts: Lois Robinson, one of very few female welders in a traditionally male-dominated workplace, was not simply surrounded by sexually explicit pictures, cartoons, and remarks arguably demeaning to women; she was the target of some intimidating sexual come-ons and insults, and the subject of a pornographic picture circulated to her co-workers. To make this case even easier, shipyard management policies prohibited virtually everything but pornographic speech in the workplace: if a woman worker had posted a feminist manifesto, it would probably have been taken down. This was hardly a free marketplace of ideas. But what if management had permitted circulation of political as well as pornographic speech? What if there were roughly equal numbers of male and female welders in the shipyard? What circumstances might make sexist or racist speech in the workplace merely irritating instead of discriminatory?

Outside the workplace, however, where the discriminatory effects of pornography are, at best, highly questionable, it's appropriate for pornographers to seek refuge behind the First



Amendment (which is supposed to be a shield). I'm willing to cede my First Amendment right to start a riot or to encourage a skinhead to burn a cross on my neighbor's lawn, but I'm not willing to cede anyone's right to read pornography when the harm of it is so unclear and so unprovable.

I do, however, consider pornography and other forms of hate speech worthy subjects for debate. I agree that we need more speech, not less. And although I find her speech hateful, I'd never impose on Catharine MacKinnon the prohibitions she would impose on others. (MacKinnon recently endorsed the censorship of a women's art exhibit about prostitution.) I welcome Marisa Jones's call to "stimulate discussion." I'd rather provoke people to think for themselves than persuade, much less require, them to think like me.

WHO PROSPERS?

Is the James Fallows who reviewed my book *Who Prospers?* in the November *Atlantic* ("A Perfectible Culture") the same James Fallows who described the Philippines as "A Damaged Culture" in the November, 1987, *Atlantic*? The 1987 Fallows says, "The countries [Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore] that surround the Philippines have become the world's most famous showcases for the impact of culture on economic development. . . the Philippines illustrates . . . that culture can make a naturally rich country poor."

Today Fallows seems bemused by the power of culture on the one hand, and the power of political and economic systems on the other, and his perplexity, along with a predilection for form over substance, contributes to his "Yes, but . . ." verdict on *Who Prospers?* We both agree with (and quote, he in *More Like Us*) Daniel Patrick Moynihan's sage observation, "The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself." Yet Fallows now seems mired in the culture-policy, chicken-egg riddle.

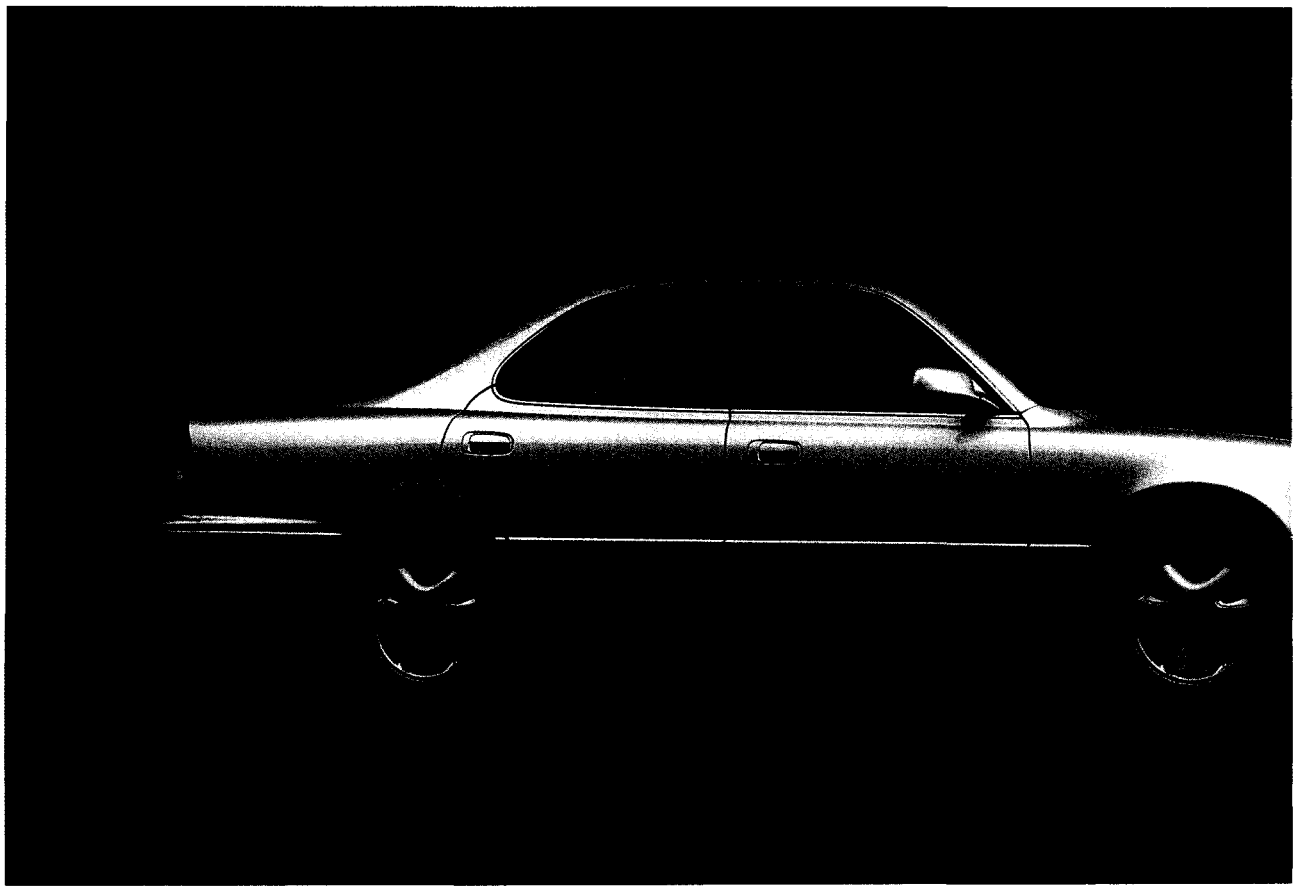
Fallows makes much of my "counterpunching" posture in writing my first book, *Underdevelopment Is a State of Mind: The Latin American Case*. He is

wrong. I wrote that book because it had become apparent to me during many years of work in Latin America that what was in the minds of Latin Americans was the principal obstacle to progress. The fact that culture was a compelling rejoinder to people who blamed Latin America's condition on Yankee imperialism was incidental. I concluded that if culture is that important in Latin America, it must also be important, for good or for bad, in other human societies. That is what led me to write *Who Prospers?*

As Fallows knows, anyone who argues that culture is important is likely to run into a barrage of "yes, but"s. They are often about as weighty as the ones he adduces. For example, he pooh-poohs the threat of "Spanish-language separatism," noting that "German-American ideologues were endorsing something similar a century ago." Those ideologues were not reinforced by government-supported bilingual-education programs, ballots, and informational literature, and, as with most European languages, German was rarely

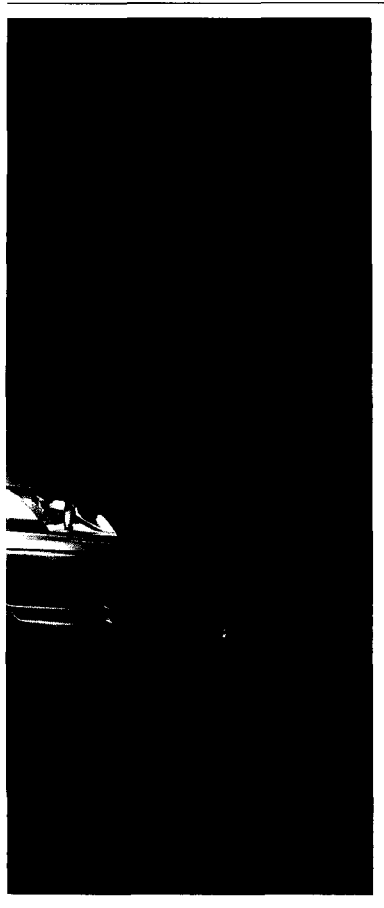
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the switch for the power window or

the buttons for the optional

six-disc CD auto-changer, or

whatever –

the first

time you reach for it, the very first

time, it will be there,

as if you had placed it there your-

self. Kind of spooky.

Of course, we also do

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of a sleek, aerodynamic

body, the feel of gentle lumbar

support, the smell of avail-

able handcrafted leather

upholstery, and the soothing

sound of eight stra-

tegically placed speakers.

As for taste, it's in

everything we do. Figuratively

speaking,

of course.





spoken by the third generation. In contrast, a respected scholar has noted, "No foreign language has been so persistently retained and is as likely to survive as Spanish." Fallows adds, "If you don't speak English, you can't go to college. . . ." Tell that to the 30 percent of third-generation Mexican-Americans who drop out of high school.

In his preoccupation with style, tone, and nuance, Fallows loses track of several of the core issues *Who Prospers?* addresses, for example: the crosscurrents of Confucian culture that drive Japanese, Korean, and Chinese (outside of China) achievement wherever East Asians live but have suppressed economic creativity within China until recently; the disconcertingly slow acculturation of Mexican-Americans and the adverse consequences for poor black and Hispanic citizens—and for the American sense of community—of substantially uncontrolled immigration; the persistence of the culture of slavery in the United States (and in Haiti and Liberia), perpetuated by the isolation of Jim Crow and compounded by the isolation and pathology of the ghetto, a culture I consider a greater obstacle to progress than racism and discrimination for the one third of American blacks who live in poverty.

I infer that Fallows shares my concern about the decline of America, although he limits his comments to economic performance, whereas I perceive our decline extending to social irresponsibility and loss of sense of community. He implies that we have not experienced an erosion of values, that the same problems were apparent in our society a hundred years ago, and all we need is some good policies and a little time. I hope he's right. I fear he's wrong.

LAWRENCE E. HARRISON
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

PYRAMID SCHEMES

Evan Hadingham's report "Engineering: Pyramid Schemes" (November *Atlantic*) was indeed intriguing. However, I don't believe that anywhere in "pyramidology" has consideration been given to the theory that elephants may have been used as the motive source in the placement of the stones. If Hannibal threatened Rome with war elephants in the Punic Wars, then it is conceivable that trained elephants were

used in the pyramid construction that took place 1,000 years earlier.

STANLEY SWEDA
Okeechobee, Fla.

Evan Hadingham's down-to-earth article on unsolved engineering problems of the pyramids was a pleasure for a long-term Egyptology buff like me who is tired of outer-space explanations for these fantastic constructions.

Hadingham says that even generous assumptions show that a finished stone had to be put in place every two minutes during the construction of the largest pyramid, since Khufu (Cheops) reigned for twenty-three years at most. I wonder why he did not draw the obvious conclusion that this was impossible and thus that the Great Pyramid was not started and finished during a single Pharaoh's reign and could not have been a mausoleum.

When I first made this calculation, I allowed sixteen hours a day (daylight to total darkness) but granted the overseers (and possibly the workmen) frequent days off to attend the many Egyptian religious festivals and a month's interruption because of the annual inundation of the Nile. The stones could have been shaped only roughly off-site, since each stone, slanted from front to back and on both sides, all done with copper or stone chisels, had to fit its neighbors exactly. In addition, the foundation had to be very carefully leveled and lined up to face the points of the compass exactly, and the facing stones had to be applied after the basic stones were in place and presented problems whether they were put in place from the ground up or from the top down. With my less generous assumptions I came out with about the same result as Hadingham's: from the year of Khufu's inauguration to the year of his death, a stone had to be put in place faster than every two minutes.

I recently watched a hospital addition being built of concrete blocks. With pre-cast blocks that had rings implanted so that they could be lifted with gigantic derricks, it took twenty minutes to put one block in place. Perhaps the ancients could do better with tafia, the lubricating local clay, but I am forced to the conclusion that the Great Pyramid took at least 100 and perhaps 200 years to build.

If the purpose was not use as a mau-

soleum, and the Great Pyramid was not built in the lifetime of one Pharaoh, what would have caused the Egyptians to expend so much time and effort on its construction? One thinks of the Gothic cathedrals: perhaps the motivation was religious. However, the careful orientation to the points of the compass, and the construction of a sloping tunnel to the outside which was far larger and more finished than required for mere access, suggests an astronomical function.

DANIEL L. KLINE
Cincinnati, Ohio

Evan Hadingham replies:

Archaeology, tomb reliefs, and ancient texts all indicate that the pyramids were designed primarily for the rulers' intricate funeral rites. Numerous unfinished tombs and pyramids testify that these burial structures were not always completed in time for the funeral and that there was no "state program" to finish off a ruler's monument once he was dead. Hence it has always been assumed that the Great Pyramid was completed during Cheops' lifetime.

But just how long did Cheops live? Recently a leading Egyptologist raised the possibility that the lengths of Pharaohs' reigns cited in a crucial "king list" text have been underestimated by a factor of two, which would give Cheops a reign of forty-six rather than twenty-three years. This would result in the slightly more generous figure of one block every four minutes—still extraordinary, though by no means impossible if we assume that dozens of well-organized crews were laboring simultaneously. Many of the inner-core blocks are quite small and crudely finished, which would have sped up the operation.

As for the use of elephants, there is no faunal or artistic evidence for the existence of elephants in Egypt in the Old Kingdom period, though tomb reliefs do show oxen assisting teams of laborers in hauling stone blocks.

ADVICE & CONSENT

ES. Goldman's story "Meeting the Queen" (November *Atlantic*) lays out the characteristics of a useful wife as they were in 1900: is congenial, is of the same religion, knows how to throw a party, remembers family birthdays,



keeps the ball in the man's court, is understanding, knows what to wear, is a curator of life's small treasures.

These are some of the rules that dictated what a woman was to be; unspoken are the things she must not be. Note that they involve her very being; these are not skills anyone may learn to qualify for a job. They are part of a definition that smothers any drive to become a mature individual bent on living a self-determined life.

RENEE JACKSON
Seattle, Wash.

Nicholas Lemann, in his otherwise fine review of David Weber's book *The Spanish Frontier in North America* ("A Failed Dominion," November *Atlantic*), makes the bizarre statement (in explaining Spain's failure to meet the English and French colonial challenges) that "mercantilism doesn't work." The combination of elements in the English and French colonial strategies—trading and military alliances with various Indian tribes, royal charters for colonial companies, royal monopolies and taxes on

certain important goods, periodic colonial wars with each other—was mercantilism. The failure of the Spanish lay in their practice of an earlier, more primitive form of mercantilism that focused obsessively on gold and silver mining to the exclusion of anything else. Under laissez-faire the European colonial empires and capitalism itself would never have gotten started. The French never abandoned mercantilism, and the British did so only after becoming the world's dominant economic and political power, a position that allowed them the luxury of a laissez-faire policy—later a major cause of their precipitous decline.

DALLAS C. KENNEDY
Chicago, Ill.

Craig Carver's Word Histories for November prompts this response from an otherwise delighted etymology junkie. Carver suggests, "The Italian *badani* (noise of people chattering) comes from the Hebrew formula *anna Adonai* (please Lord)." But I think it more likely that *badani* derives from

the Hebrew *bi Adoni*, which also means "please Lord" (cf. 1 Kings 3:26, "And the woman said . . . Bi Adoni, please my Lord, give her the living child and do not kill it").

CHARLOTTE A. BERKOWITZ
Houston, Texas

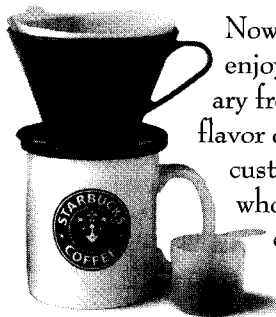
I enjoyed "How Portland Does It," by Philip Langdon (November *Atlantic*). There is a certain irony in the fact that MAX is planning a light-rail route to the suburb of Beaverton, since this municipality was served by the so-called "Red Electrics" of the Southern Pacific from 1914 to 1929. The equipment from that defunct operation went to Los Angeles, where I remember riding those cars as a boy. Now both cities are going full circle with light rail!

ALAN J. PARCELLS
Kalamazoo, Mich.

EDITORS' NOTE:

The photo credit in "The Okavango Delta" (January *Atlantic*) failed to include reference to Minden Pictures. We regret the omission.

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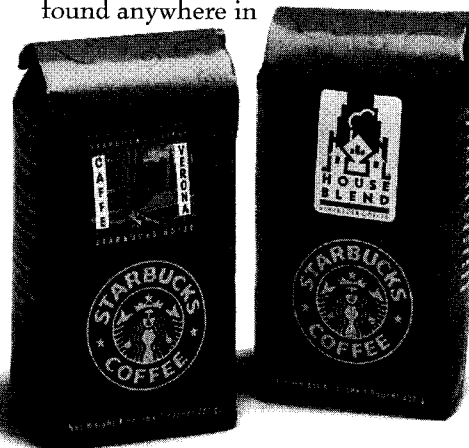
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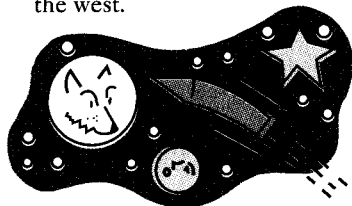


ARTS & LETTERS

Consumers shopping for valentines will find fewer cards with passionate red envelopes this year, owing to advancing postal technology. By 1995 the U.S. Postal Service expects to have replaced manual sorting almost entirely with computerized sorting, including the use of optical scanning machines that read a Zip Code and then mark the envelope with a bar code to direct it to its destination (a technology already employed by courier companies and some airline baggage sorters). The computers, however, have difficulty reading numbers if the contrast between the writing and the envelope isn't strong, so the Postal Service has asked greeting-card manufacturers to phase out dark-colored envelopes over the next two years. Hallmark Cards, which controls about 45 percent of the greeting-card market, is beginning to comply. The Postal Service emphasizes that the phase-out is merely a suggestion (as are Zip Codes themselves), to expedite the moving of mail throughout the nation.

THE SKIES

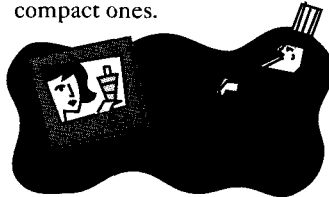
February 6, Full Moon, also known this month as the Wolf, Hunger, or Trapper's Moon. 10, just before midnight the waning Moon has Jupiter to the northeast of it and the bright star Spica, in the constellation Virgo, to the east. 24, just after sunset Venus, which is at its greatest brilliancy, lies close to the crescent Moon in the west.



Q & A

Why do light bulbs generally burn out as the light is turned on, rather than just going dark while the light is on?

The electrical current passing through an ordinary light bulb heats up the tungsten filament until it emits light. Over time atoms are "boiled off" the filament, and it develops thin spots. The hotter a filament grows, the less electricity it conducts, and so the greatest flow of current occurs when the bulb is first turned on; thin spots will heat more quickly, and grow hotter, and expand more abruptly, than the rest of the brittle filament. A bulb that's about to fail will often be done in by this thermal shock or by a magnetically induced physical jolt that accompanies the initial surge of current. Frequent on-off cycling of incandescent bulbs doesn't shorten their lifespan significantly, although it might have an adverse effect on fluorescent bulbs, including the new compact ones.



GOVERNMENT

February 24, the Federal Communications Commission's advisory panel for high-definition television (HDTV) makes its choice of national technical standards for the new medium. The FCC will almost certainly follow the panel's recommendations. HDTV boosters say that someday soon telecommunications, computing, and home entertainment will merge into one technology, and all of it will sound as clear as CDs and look as good as the movies. Five parties have proposed standards: Zenith, America's only remaining television manufacturer, working with AT&T; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; General Instruments, which manufactures

cable-television and satellite-transmission equipment; Philips-Thomson-Sarnoff-NBC, a consortium that includes the designers of Europe's HDTV system; and NHK, the Japanese broadcasting system. Paradoxically, Japan, because it took the lead in developing HDTV, has heavily invested in technology and hardware that is now considered outmoded and unlikely to be the FCC's choice. Initially the FCC will offer television stations a new HDTV channel for each existing channel they broadcast on.



EXPIRING PATENT

No. 3,935,870. Guide means for cutting hair. "A device for use in cutting long hair to an even length . . . comprising a template of semi-rigid material . . . including shoulder portions adapted to be draped over the shoulders and a back panel portion adapted to extend across the back of a person, said template including . . . a predetermined pattern of hair length defined on the surface of said back panel for guiding scissors of the barber in cutting the hair to conform to said pattern."

FOOD

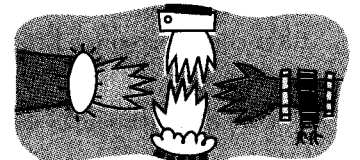
Hundreds of fertilizer producers, wholesalers, distributors, and brokers will be descending on New Orleans at the beginning of the month for the Fertilizer Institute's annual meeting, which is the last big flurry of buying and selling before spring planting. The fertilizer needs of the nation's farmers are hard to predict: they depend on how much of each crop is planted, which in turn depends on weather, existing supplies, the potential for export, and government subsidies. One circumstance that



could affect this year's volume is the record size of last year's corn crop, which amounted to some 9.3 billion bushels (a more typical harvest is about eight billion bushels). Corn requires relatively hefty amounts of fertilizer, and the crop typically accounts for about half the nation's demand. Last year's surplus could result in the planting of a larger proportion of other crops—ones that demand less fertilizer.

50 YEARS AGO

Thomas Mann, writing in the February, 1943, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The diaspora of European culture which we are witnessing, the arrival of so many of its bearers, representatives of all categories of science and art, to these shores; their more or less involuntary decision, transformed however into an *amor fati*, to complete their work in the American air of life—that is something very strange and unprecedented; it opens unexampled possibilities of exchange and equalization. . . . Our emigration thus assumes an entirely different significance from that of any former emigration: the significance of the coalescence of the hemispheres, of the unification of the earth. 'Europe wants to become one'—that is long obsolete; the *earth* wants to become one. 'Unification' is the word and command of the world hour, and the future belongs to the union of knowledge and hope; of profundity and courage; of faith and labor in the face of all doubt, and despite all doubt."



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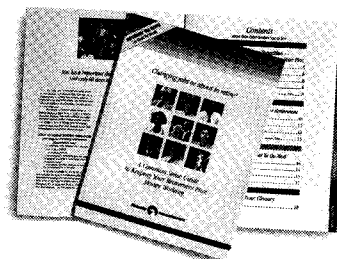
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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

Order in the Court

Justice by the numbers

A FEW MONTHS ago a friend was elevated from the base munificence of her private law practice to the noble penury of the Connecticut bench. My wife greeted the news with the announcement that she, too, would like to be a judge. I pointed out a few of the usual prerequisites: "One, law school. Two, practicing law for a while. Three, getting involved with politics." She said, "No, no. I want to go straight to the judge part."

Most of us, I imagine, have from time to time entertained similar aspirations. Who has not read reports of a judge letting off a chronic malefactor with a mere slap on the wrist and suspected that any citizen hauled at random off the streets would have devised a more appropriate retribution? By the same token, on those occasions when the headlines report the meting out of a punishment that truly fits the crime—"SLUM-LORD SENTENCED TO LIFE IN TENEMENT," say—who does not sense that the forces of the universe have at least for an instant come into harmonious alignment? Who doubts that were he or she to ascend to the bench, such occasions would become less and less rare? Certainly my wife feels that no-nonsense sentencing would be a hallmark of her

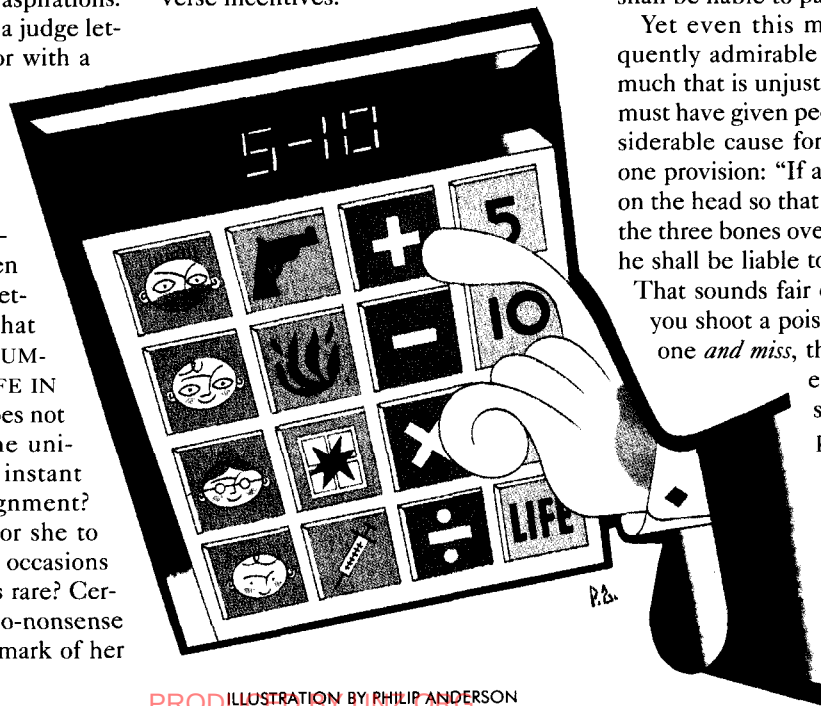
judicial career, and when I hear imprecations like "Throw away the key!" and "Fry 'em!" tumble from her lips as she reads the morning paper, I am assured that she has not broken training.

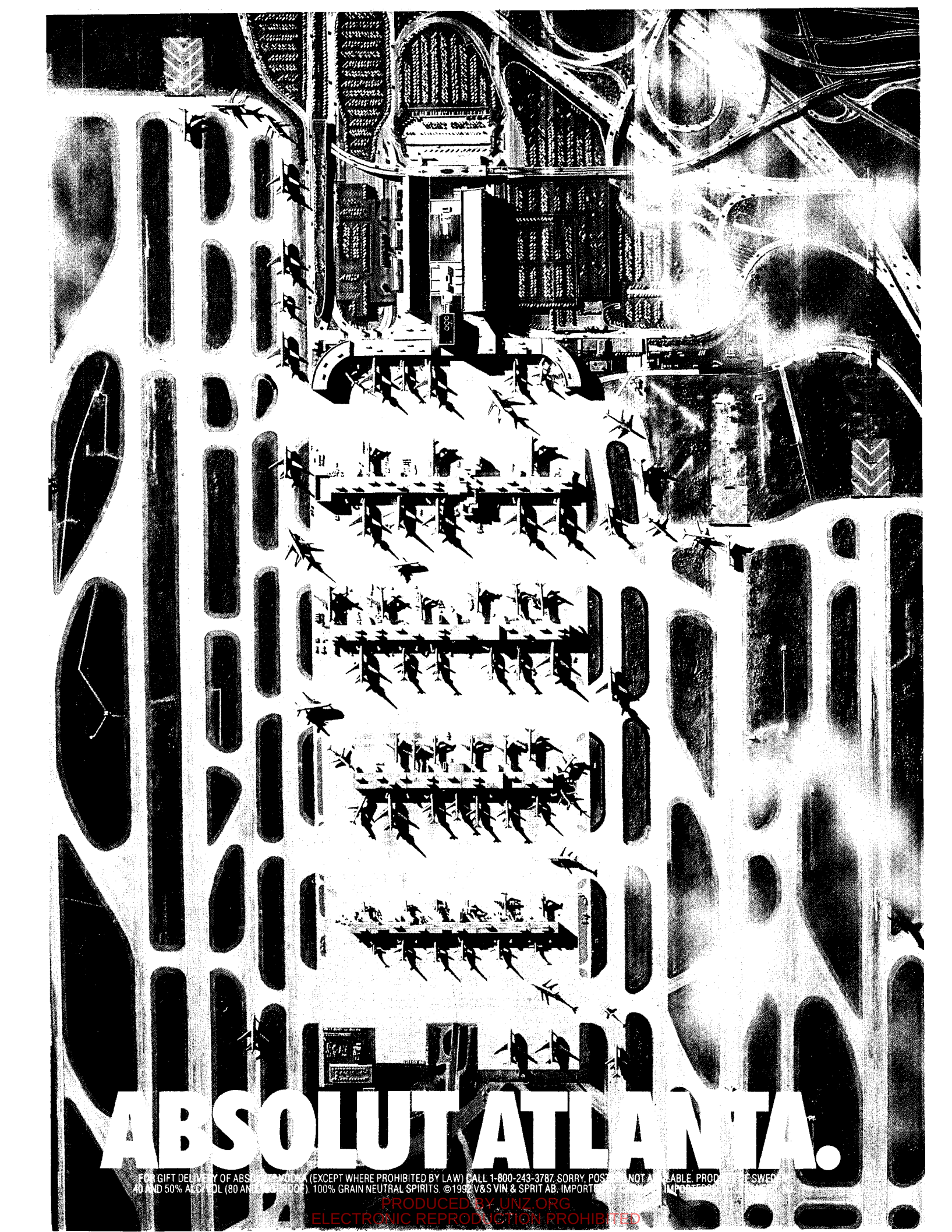
THE SEARCH for a better way to dispense justice lies, of course, at the very heart of the great human drama. And, to be fair, that the record so far is decidedly mixed owes as much to the existence of law itself as to the idiosyncrasies of magistrates. The decision by many societies—a hasty one, some might argue—to abandon the simple blood feud as the basis of conflict resolution led eventually to the embrace of an alternative system, in which a common body of law and custom, jerry-built through centuries of venal accretion and bitter compromise, was meant to cover every conceivable situation. This was a recipe, we now know, for maddening inconsistency and perverse incentives.

The problems became apparent very early. Consider the *Pactus legis salicae*, the influential legal code promulgated by Clovis, the Frankish King, in the sixth century A.D. The Salic Law is, in the main, a hard-nosed and unsentimental document, and a refreshingly unhypocritical one in certain particulars. With its concept of *wergeld*, or "man-money," it was unabashed about asserting that the lives of different kinds of people (young men, pregnant women, slaves) had different monetary values—as compared with the daintier modern practice of letting juries implicitly make similar distinctions while pretending that they don't. The Salic Law also shone the cleansing light of justice into crannies that many of us might have overlooked. For example: "If anyone without the permission of the judge or of him who put it there, presumes to take the head of a man which his enemy had put on a stick, he shall be liable to pay 600 denarii."

Yet even this methodical and frequently admirable document contains much that is unjust or inexplicable, and must have given people at the time considerable cause for complaint. Here is one provision: "If anyone strikes a man on the head so that the brain shows and the three bones over the brain protrude, he shall be liable to pay 1,800 denarii."

That sounds fair enough. But wait: If you shoot a poisoned arrow at someone *and miss*, the fine is even higher—2,500 denarii, the same fine levied on a person who "cuts another man's hand and the hand hangs crippled." A similar skewing is evident with respect to libel. "If anyone charges another



An aerial, black and white photograph of Atlanta, Georgia, where the city's skyline is composed of Absolut Vodka bottles of varying sizes. The bottles are arranged to mimic the layout of the city, including the downtown core, the airport, and surrounding suburbs. The image is high-contrast, with the dark bottles standing out against the lighter background of the city's infrastructure.

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with throwing down his shield while in the army or with fleeing because of fear," the fine, according to the Salic Law, is to be 120 denarii. So why, "if anyone calls another a rabbit," should the fine be twice that amount? Why should the fine for knocking out a tooth be the same as for cutting off an ear or a finger? And it is hard to see how the penalty for personal assault—120 denarii for each landed punch, but levied only on the first three—could have done anything to limit the severity of such incidents.

I would hasten to point out that such imbalances are by no means confined to ancient history. Living in twentieth-century Massachusetts, I fully empathize with the sixth-century Franks. My state's legal code differs noticeably from the Salic Law in significant details, but in some elements of character differs not at all. I was surprised to learn, for example, that in Massachusetts the maximum fine for throwing litter from a moving vehicle is a stiff \$3,000 (first offense). To put that sum into perspective, consider that sending one of my children out on the streets to beg for a day would risk, at maximum, only a \$200 fine. Indeed, for less than the cost in Massachusetts of tossing a candy wrapper out the window, I could drive all three children to downtown Boston to beg for two days on a holiday weekend (\$1,200), sell cigarettes to each member of a second-grade baseball team (\$900), steal a box of tools from a construction site (\$100), and, while driving twenty-five miles above the speed limit (\$200), run over ten cats and fail to report the fact (\$500).

THIS IS NOT to say that no progress has been made during the past 1,500 years—that the sharp quilllets of the law have become only more inexplicable. Clovis would, I think, have been impressed by the *Federal Sentencing Guidelines Manual*, a three-pound, 800-page document that came in the mail not long ago. I had ordered this document, which is compiled by the United States Sentencing Commission, after learning about it from our friend the judge. The manual represents an ambitious attempt to make the calculation of a criminal's debt to society what it has never before truly been: rational and scientific, coolly consistent, mathematically aloof. In addition to the federal government,

perhaps a dozen states have established sentencing standards of one kind or another.

The federal guidelines are, however, without peer. All federal crimes are now listed according to a degree of seriousness, or "offense level," from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 43. These numbers run down the left-hand side of a page headed "Sentencing Table." From left to right run the Roman numerals I to VI. These represent the "criminal history category," which refers to the degree of incorrigibility of the accused. The Sentencing Table works somewhat like a mileage chart in a road atlas. To determine the punishment for a particular person convicted of a particular crime, simply move a finger across from the offense level and then down from the criminal-history category.

Actually, it's not quite that simple: The offense level and the criminal-history category are both subject to dozens of incremental modifications. Was the perpetrator a ringleader or an accomplice? Was he on parole at the time of the crime? Did he abuse a position of public trust? Did he try to obstruct justice? Did the crime involve the abuse of specialized professional skills, such as those of accountancy or the bar? If there was a victim, was the perpetrator courteous and considerate toward this person, or was his behavior pretty much inexcusable? Was the victim elderly or infirm? Mentally impaired? A police officer? Is the perpetrator truly sorry for what he did? Depending on the answers, the judge can add or subtract points. The figuring is done on printed worksheets, which lead one along relentlessly, from line to line, from page to page, much the way a tax return does. Here is how Worksheet D begins:

Docket Number _____

1. **Adjusted Offense Level**
(From Worksheet A or B)
If Worksheet B is required, enter the result from Worksheet B, Line 9. Otherwise, enter the result from Worksheet A, Line 5.
2. **Acceptance of Responsibility**
(See Chapter Three, Part E)
If applicable, enter "2." If not applicable, enter "0."
3. **Offense Level Total**
(Line 1 less Line 2)
4. **Criminal History Category**
(From Worksheet C)
Enter the result from Worksheet C, Line 8.

This work culminates in the computation of what might be thought of as Adjusted Gross Behavior. The Sentencing Table then reveals What You Owe, expressed as a range of months in prison. A person in Criminal History Category I (basically, someone with no more than one prior conviction, and that for a minor offense) who hijacks an airplane without loss of life (Offense Level 38) would be liable for 235 to 293 months in prison. The range of possible sentences in the table extends from a low of "0-6" to a high of "life."

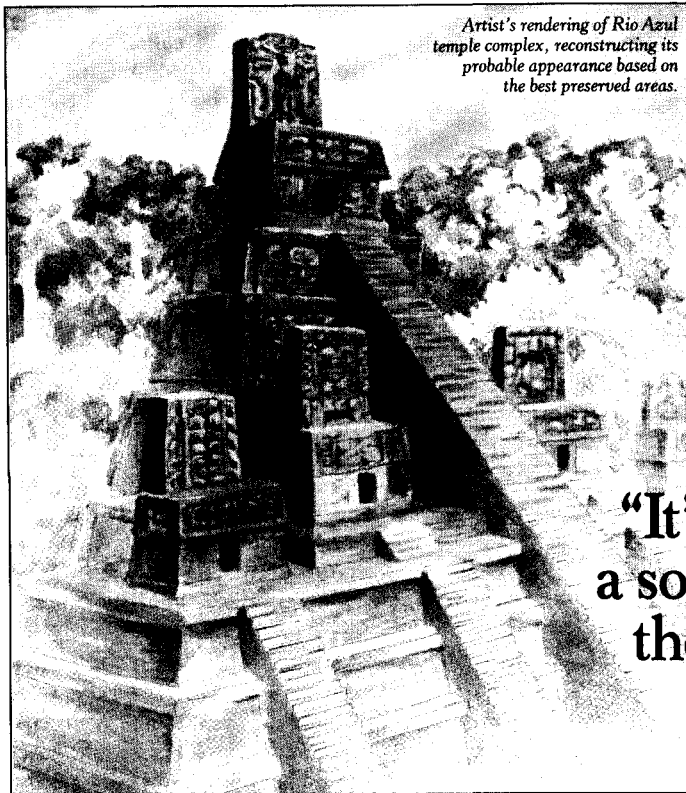
No provision seems to have been made for handing down a sentence that in exceptional circumstances my wife has been known to favor: "Nuke 'em till they glow." But as the manual frankly notes, "some offenses that occur infrequently are not considered in the guidelines."

THESE IS, I must admit, a certain technocratic efficiency in the idea of the *Federal Sentencing Guidelines Manual*. In theory, large numbers of miscreants can be processed even as we avoid wide disparities in the calibration of justice. Perhaps one day soon we will also be able to achieve substantial economies by having criminals do the paperwork and file their own sentencing "returns," just as taxpayers do. Career criminals might even be made to file quarterly estimates. Certainly the development of a criminal class capable of dealing with forms of this kind—capable even of cheating on them imaginatively—would put paid to talk of American educational decline.

Still, the advent of guidelines cannot help muting enthusiasm for going straight to the judge part, at least in one whose tastes in justice may run to the poetic. And one can only wonder about what effect guidelines may ultimately have on the very idea of exercising judgment.

I cannot erase a discomfiting image from my mind. It involves Solomon, that wise judge, who in a famous episode had to choose between two women each claiming to be the mother of a certain infant. He called for his sword. And he . . . well, the passage in the Book of Kings, as I see it now, reads like this: "And the King said, 'Bring me Worksheet D.' And Worksheet D was brought to him."

—Cullen Murphy



Artist's rendering of Rio Azul temple complex, reconstructing its probable appearance based on the best preserved areas.

drained whole swamps, while converting hundreds of acres of dense jungle into arable land. The Adams' team discovered murals and carved stone monuments that recorded the history of the royal families. They also uncovered majestic temples as well as stone courts where the Maya competed in ritual ball games.

"The Maya fascinate us because they were so advanced for their time

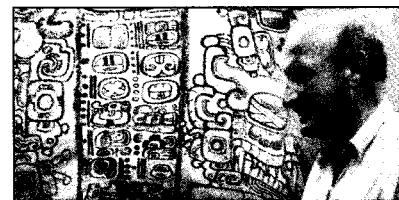
"It's an amazing story of a sophisticated people with the will to tame a jungle."

Dr. Richard Adams

and place," said Adams. "They had a sophisticated writing, mathematical, and astronomy system; and they were skilled artisans, farmers, and builders. In short, they created a complex society in an extremely hostile jungle environment."

In the remote jungle of the Petén region of Guatemala, an intrepid band of archaeologists, led by Dr. Richard Adams, have unearthed the ancient Maya city of Rio Azul. Despite temperatures that rarely fell below 100 degrees Fahrenheit, humidity that hovered near 100 percent, and the thick tropical growth that impeded their efforts, Adams and his team were able to excavate a great deal of this two-thousand-year-old city. The result is new insight into a remarkable pre-Columbian civilization that predates both the Incas of South America and the Aztecs of Mexico.

The dig yielded a vivid picture of a highly advanced people who channeled rivers, terraced hillsides, and



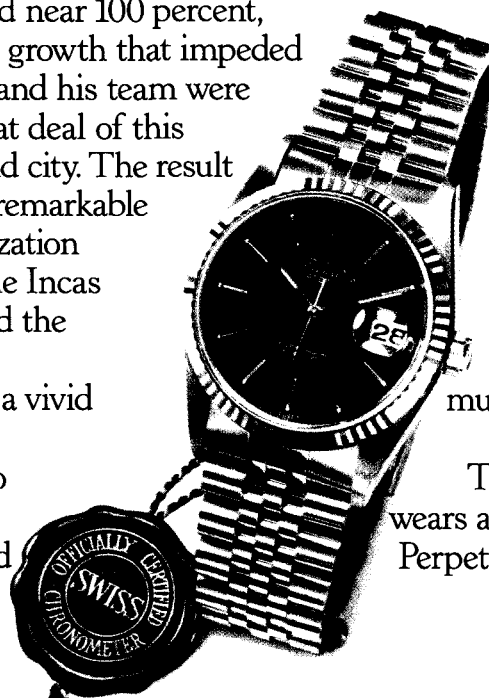
Dr. Richard Adams with a governor's tomb mural at Rio Azul.

Given its inhospitable climate and inaccessibility, Rio Azul is an archaeologist's nightmare. Resupply is so difficult, Dr. Richard Adams must rely on whatever equipment he takes with him on a dig.

That's why it's not surprising he wears a rugged Rolex Oyster Perpetual timepiece.



ROLEX



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Syria in the making: negotiators in Paris (T. E. Lawrence, third from right), 1919

SYRIA

Identity Crisis

Hafez al-Assad has so far prevented the Balkanization of his country, but he can't last forever

ON MY FIRST visit to Syria, in the 1970s, a tourist-information official at Damascus airport handed me a map on which not only the Israeli-held Golan Heights but also the Hatay region around the ancient city of Antioch were depicted as part of the country. Wanting to see Antioch, I asked the official about tours there. His reply and apologetic tone gave me pause: "Unfortunately, sir, for the time being it is not possible; maybe in a few months."

Located at the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea, the Hatay is a 2,000-square-mile area where Arabs and Armenians once slightly outnumbered Turks. In July of 1938 the Turkish army moved in, forcing many of the Arabs and Armenians to flee, and preparing the way for the Turkish government to annex the region. The French, who held the mandate for Syria, did not protest, and the occupied population could not. Thinking about this history in terms of the tourist official's sheep-

ishness has since led me to wonder, How could the Syrians ever acknowledge the 1967 loss of the Golan Heights when they don't really accept an older loss—one that, unlike the Golan Heights, has long been officially recognized by the world community?

The answer is simply that they can't. As the example of the Hatay suggests, the loss of the Golan Heights was merely the latest of several territorial truncations that underpin an explosive and unmentionable historical reality: that Syria—whose population, like Lebanon's, is a hodgepodge of feuding Middle Eastern minorities—has always been more identifiable as a region of the Ottoman Empire than as a nation in the post-Ottoman era. The psychology of Syria's internal politics, a realm whose violence and austere perversity continue to baffle the West, is bound up in the question of Syria's national identity. The identity question is important: events inside Syria reverberate throughout the Middle East.

THE WORD "SYRIA" is derived from the Semitic *Siryon*, which appears in Deuteronomy in reference to Mount Hermon, which straddles the current frontiers of Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. From the early nineteenth century until the end of the First World War, when the Ottoman sultanate collapsed, the region that Eu-

ropean travelers called Syria stretched from the Taurus Mountains of Turkey in the north to Egypt and the Arabian Desert in the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to Mesopotamia in the east. Present-day Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, western Iraq, and southern Turkey were all part of this vast area. Syria was not linked to any specific national sentiment.

What sentiment did exist was pan-Arab. Indeed, the nineteenth-century Syrian cities of Damascus and Beirut, with their secret cultural and political societies, engendered the First World War Arab revolt against the Turks. But the revolt, although it freed Arabia from outside control, only complicated matters for Syria, whose proximity to Europe left it particularly vulnerable to foreign exploitation.

Anglo-French rivalry for spoils resulted in a division of Syria into six zones. A sliver of northern Syria became part of a new Turkish state, which was being carved out of the old Ottoman sultanate by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. (This area was separate from the Hatay, whose annexation would come later.) Syria's eastern desert became part of a new British mandate: Iraq. Southern Syria, too, was soon controlled by the British, who created two additional territories: a mandate in Palestine and a kingdom in Transjordan, the latter ruled by Britain's First World War ally Abdullah, a son of the Sharif of Mecca. The French got the territory that was left over, which they in turn subdivided into Lebanon and Syria.

Lebanon's borders were drawn so as to bring a large population of mainly Sunni Muslims under the domination of Maronite Christians, who were allied with France, spoke French, and though not exactly Catholic had a concordat with the Holy See in Rome. Syria, Lebanon's neighbor, was a writhing ghost of a would-be nation. Although territory had been cut away on all sides, Syria still contained not only every warring sect and religion and parochial tribal interest but also the headquarters, in Damascus, of the pan-Arabist movement, whose aim was to erase all the borders that the Europeans had just created. Thus, although it was more compact than the sprawling pre-war region called Syria, the new French mandate with that name had even fewer unifying threads. Freya Stark, a British diplomat, said of the French mandate, "I haven't



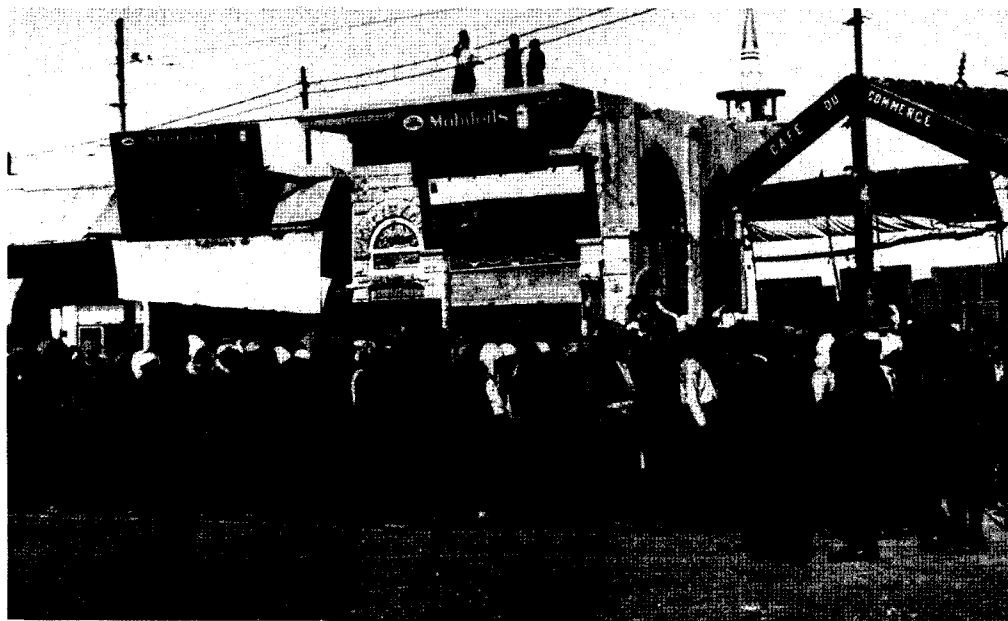
yet come across one spark of national feeling: it is all sects and hatreds and religions.”

Each of Syria's sects and religions was—as it largely still is—concentrated in a specific geographical area. In the center was Damascus, which together with the cities of Homs and Hama constituted the heartland of the Sunni Arab majority. In the south was Jabal Druze (“Druze Mountain”), where lived a remote community of heterodox Muslims who were resistant to Damascene rule and had close links across the border with Transjordan. In the north was Aleppo, a cosmopolitan bazaar and trading center containing large numbers of Kurds, Arab Christians, Armenians, Circassians, and Jews, all of whom felt allegiance more to Mosul and Baghdad (both now in Iraq) than to Damascus. And in the west, contiguous to Lebanon, was the mountain stronghold of Latakia, dominated by the Alawites, the most oppressed and recalcitrant of French Syria's Arab minorities, who were destined to have a dramatic effect on postcolonial Syria.

The Alawites, along with the Druzes and the Isma'ilis (still another Muslim sect in Syria), are remnants of a wave of Shi'ism which swept over the region a thousand years ago. The term “Alawite” means “follower of Ali,” the martyred son-in-law of Mohammed who is venerated by millions of Shi'ites in Iran and elsewhere. Yet the Alawites' resemblance to the Shi'ites constitutes the least of their heresies in the eyes of Syria's majority Sunni Arabs; far more serious is the Alawite doctrine's affinity with Phoenician paganism—and also with Christianity. Alawites celebrate many Christian festivals, including Christmas, Easter, and Palm Sunday, and their religious ceremonies make use of bread and wine.

When the French took control of Syria after the First World War, they were fresh from colonizing experiences in Algeria and Tunisia, which had kindled hostility in them to Sunni Arab nationalism. In an effort to forestall a rise in Arab nationalism, the French granted

autonomous status to Alawite-dominated Latakia and to Jabal Druze, making their inhabitants completely independent from the Sunni Arabs in Damascus, and answerable to the French only. The Alawites, the Druzes, and the other minorities also paid lower taxes than the majority Sunnis, while getting larger development subsidies from the French government. What is more, the French encouraged the recruitment of Alawites, Druzes, Kurds, and Circassians into their occupation force, the *Troupes Spéciales du Levant*. (From then on the military became a popular career for poor rural Alawites bent on advancement in Syrian society.) The majority Sunni Arabs, for their part,



French-led Senegalese with Syrian captives, Damascus, 1925, after yet another bloody revolt

were severely repressed. The Damascus region was treated as occupied territory and patrolled by tough Senegalese troops, with help from Alawites, Druzes, and Kurds. The Sunni Arabs felt besieged to a degree they had never experienced under the Ottoman Turks.

Sunni paramilitary groups responded by organizing brawls and uprisings against the French in the streets of Damascus. Arguably, not even British Palestine, with its periodic outbursts of communal violence between Arabs and Jews, was as tense and unstable a place as French Syria, whose two colliding forces—minority self-determination and Sunni pan-Arabism—were encouraged rather than restrained by French rule.

A MYTH persists about Syria, perpetuated in part by the American media, which seem to lack historical memory, and in part by supporters of Israel, who wish to distinguish starkly between the democracy of the Jewish state and the nondemocracy of Arab states. The myth is that Syria's Arab inhabitants have experience neither with democracy nor even with the rule of law. This is not true: Syria gave democracy a try, against enormous odds.

Patrick Seale, a British specialist, chronicles the postwar period in *The Struggle for Syria*. In July of 1947, soon after achieving full independence, and with France's divisive influence still

strong, Syria held elections. The results were predictable for a country that had been created out of several rival political communities. The National Party, led by Shukri al-Quwatli, got more votes than any other group, but was able to form only a minority government. The majority of the ballots went to various independents representing sectarian interests. Beneath the surface the reality was even worse. “I look around me,” wrote Habib Kahleh, in *Memoirs of a Deputy*, “and see only a bundle of contradictions.” Israel's humiliation of Arab armies in its 1948 War of Independence further weakened the democratically elected government. When the Syrian chief of staff, General Husni al-Za'im, staged a coup d'état on March 30, 1949—

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SEASON PREVIEW

Carnivals North American-style

QUÉBEC WINTER CARNIVAL

*Québec City, Québec
February 4-14*

For 11 days this month, Québec City devotes its energies to celebrating Winter Carnival. The festivities are presided over by Bonhomme Carnaval, who represents the city's triumph over winter and who reigns from a magnificent snow palace. Activities include a canoe race across the ice floes of the Saint Lawrence River, an international snow-sculpting competition, auto and snowmobile races, glittering night parades with extravagantly lit floats, an exotic hair and makeup competition, theme parties, outdoor games, and fireworks. A \$2 button provides admission to all events. For more information: Greater Québec Area Tourism and Convention Bureau, 60, rue d'Auteuil, Québec, Qué G1R 4C4; (418) 692-2471.

SAINT PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL

*Saint Paul, Minnesota
February 5-10*

The city of Saint Paul has held a winter carnival every year since 1886, when local businessmen organized it in response to a disparaging newspaper article comparing the city to Siberia. Over time the carnival's features have grown to include snow and ice sculptures, a torchlit parade, softball on ice, cross-country skiing, a dog-sled pull, a fashion show, golf in the snow, a bowling tournament, and sleigh rides. The coronation of Boreas, the king of winter carnival, is always a highlight, as is Boreas's dethroning at the hands of his archrival, Vulcan, which symbolizes the coming of spring. A massive fireworks display



caps the festivities. All outdoor events are free. For more information: Saint Paul Winter Carnival Association, 101 Norwest Center, 55 East Fifth Street, Saint Paul, MN 55101; (612) 297-6953.

MARDI GRAS IN MOBILE

*Mobile, Alabama
February 10-23*

Mobile begins its Mardi Gras celebrations with a parade on February 10. From then on until Fat Tuesday everyday conventions are forgotten and the traditions of carnival season apply. Mobile has been celebrating Mardi Gras since 1703, decades ahead of New Orleans. A host of mystic societies build floats and fill the streets with parades; members toss doubloons, beads, candies, and moon pies to onlooking revelers. Unique to Mobile's celebrations is Joe Cain Day, held the Sunday before Fat Tuesday. The city had suspended Mardi Gras during the Civil War, and in 1866, Mr. Cain, determined that the celebrations be resumed, led his own one-float parade through the city. Since 1967, Joe Cain Day has been known as "the people's

Mardi Gras." All events are free. For more information: Mobile Office of Tourism and Travel, Box 1827, Mobile, AL 36633; (800) 252-3862.

ANCHORAGE FUR RENDEZVOUS

*Anchorage, Alaska
February 12-21*

Attracting more than 300,000 visitors a year—over half as many people as live in Alaska—the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous has been a favorite winter tradition since 1936. No longer devoted solely to fur trading, drinking, and gambling, Rondy, as the event is popularly known, is now a complete winter carnival. A spectacular fireworks display kicks off the events, which include the World Championship Sled Dog Races, the World Championship Reindeer Race, snowshoe softball tournaments, masquerade balls, the selection of Rondy's king and queen regents, craft exhibits, a fiddling contest, speedskating races, and a Grand Prix car race. All outdoor events are free. For more information: Greater Anchorage, Inc., 327 Eagle Street, Anchorage, AK 99501; (907) 274-1177.

MARDI GRAS IN NEW ORLEANS

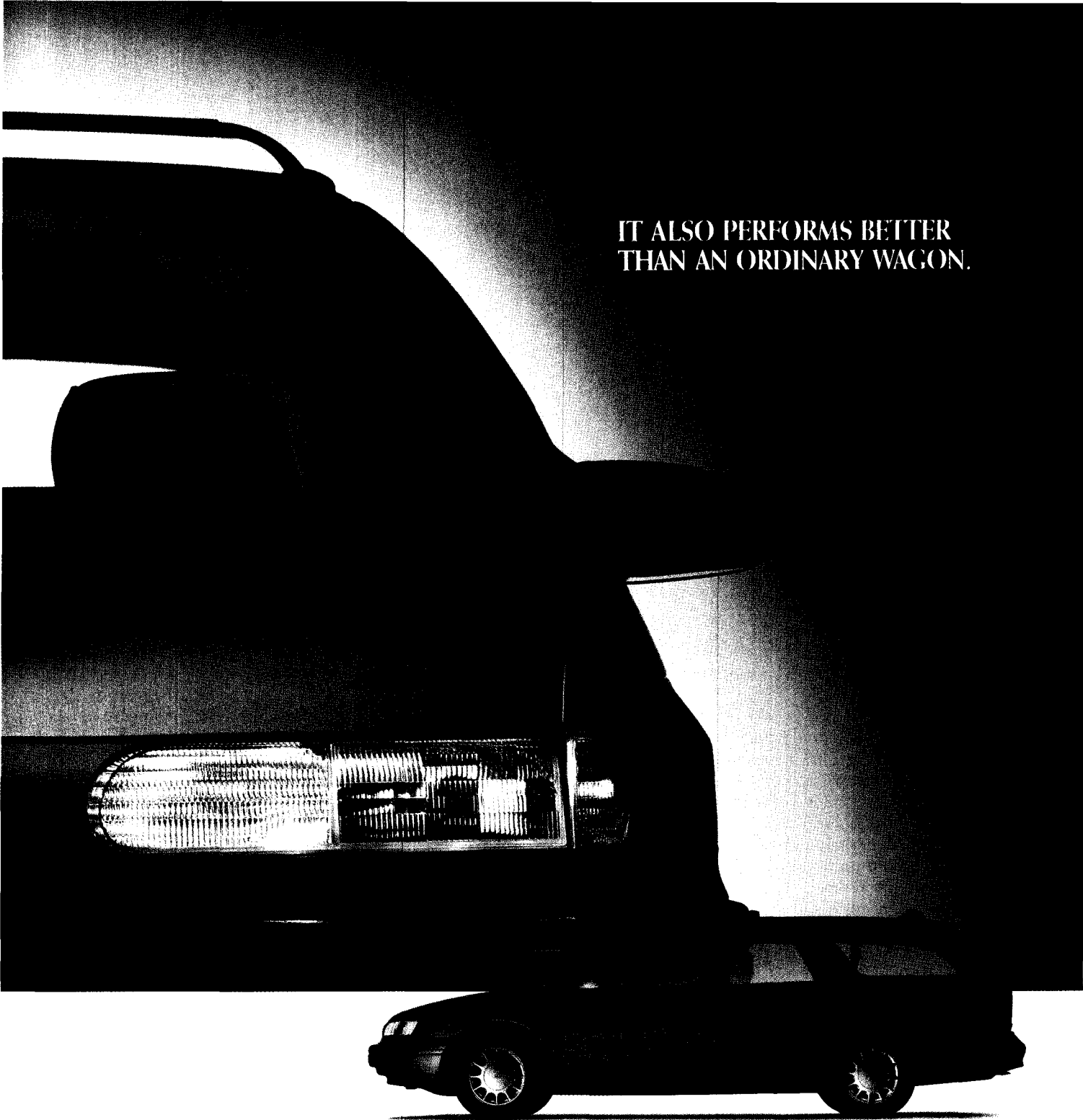
*New Orleans, Louisiana
February 12-23*

New Orleans hosts America's grandest Mardi Gras celebration: in this city, Fat Tuesday is a legal holiday. Mardi Gras organizations, known as krewes, build floats, hold parades, and put on lavish masquerade balls. Each krewe designates a king and queen to reign over its parade, which often includes up to 40 floats, accompanied by everything from marching bands and clowns to dancers and motorcycle groups. The Endymion and Bacchus krewes hold super-parades on the Saturday and Sunday before Fat Tuesday. On Lundi Gras, Mardi Gras eve, the carnival king, Rex, arrives by riverboat, followed by a jazz concert, fireworks, and a masked ball. All outdoor events are free. For more information: Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission, 1520 Sugar Bowl Drive, New Orleans, LA 70112; (504) 566-5011.

GULF COAST MARDI GRAS

*Mississippi Beach, Mississippi
February 21-23*

Mardi Gras has been officially celebrated on the Gulf Coast since 1898, when Biloxi held its first parades. Neighboring cities were soon asked to join in the festivities and now the entire Mississippi Beach community, led by carnival societies such as the Krewe of Kids and the Krewe of Neptune, holds parades and masquerade balls. All outdoor events are free. For more information: Mississippi Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, Box 6128, Gulfport, MS 39506; (601) 896-6699.



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A FORD LATELY?**

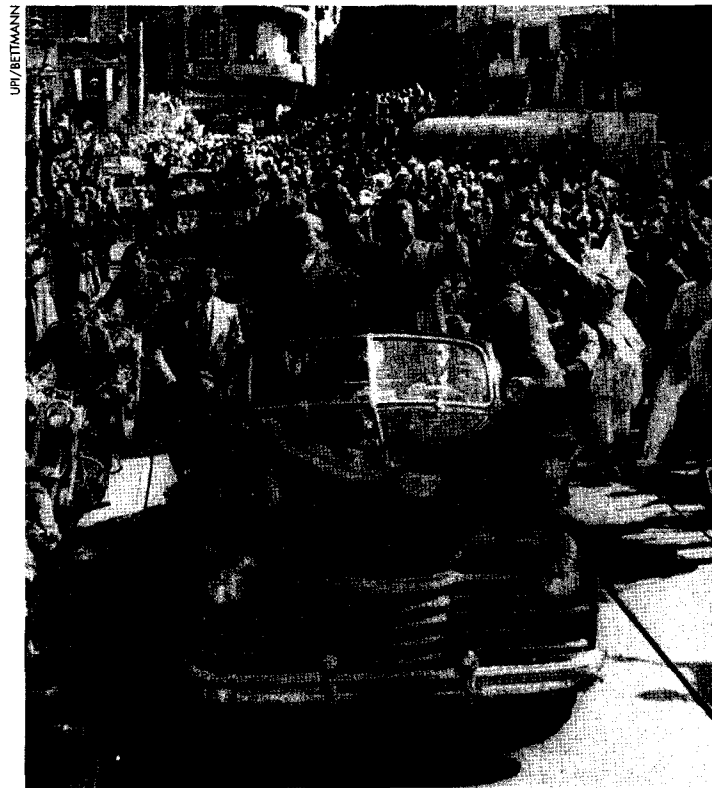


the first of many military takeovers in the postcolonial Arab world—crowds danced in the streets of Damascus.

Za'im, like many Syrian leaders who were to follow him, was exhibitionistic and extravagant, and lacked a coherent strategy for reconciling the various local nationalisms of what used to be French Syria. He was soon overthrown and summarily executed. The next military regime held new national elections, but the vote was just as fractured as it had been in 1947, and this democratic experiment, too, collapsed into anarchy. The chaos ended in December of 1949, when Colonel Adib al-Shishakli seized power. It was the third coup of the year.

Shishakli's ability to restore order caused foreign observers to hail him as the Arab world's Atatürk, who would mold Syria into a nation on the Turkish model. But it was not to be. Shishakli publicly lamented in 1953 that Syria was merely "the current official name for that country which lies within the artificial frontiers drawn up by imperialism." Unfortunately for him, he was right. In 1954 Shishakli was overthrown. Once again the dislodging force came from various sectarian elements within and outside the military.

Meanwhile, an ideological solution to Syria's contradictions began to emerge. Ba'athism, from *Ba'ath*, Arabic for "renaissance," was started by two Syrian Arabs, one Christian and one Muslim. The movement appealed to a brand of patriotism both radical and secular, and sought to replace religion with socialism. Whether Ba'athism was capable of smoothing over sectarian divisions was tested in the fall of 1954, a few months after Shishakli's overthrow, when free parliamentary elections were held. The results corroborated earlier evidence that Western democracy was not necessarily the solution for the ills of Arab societies. Although the largest number of parliamentary seats again went to the tribal and sectarian independents, the biggest gains relative to



Cairo, 1958: celebrating a political union that proved short-lived

the 1949 ballot were registered by the Ba'ath Party, which advocated a communist-style economic program and a pro-Soviet foreign policy.

Syria teetered on, with Egypt, Iraq, the Soviet Union, and the United States all interfering in its internal affairs. In January of 1958 the Syrians gave up. A delegation flew to Cairo and begged Egypt's leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, to annex Syria as part of a new union, the United Arab Republic. Shukri al-Quwatli, the Syrian President, reportedly complained thus to Nasser about the Syrian people: "Half claim the vocation of leader, a quarter believe they are prophets, and at least ten percent take themselves for gods."

The United Arab Republic collapsed in 1961, partly because non-Sunni Syrians increasingly resented the rule of Egypt's own Sunni Arabs. In 1963 the Ba'ath Party finally came to power in Damascus in a military coup. But more significant than its ideology was the ethnic makeup of the corps of officers now in control: because of the assiduous French recruitment of minorities—especially Alawites—into the *Troupes Spéciales du Levant*, the Alawites had, without anyone's noticing, gradually taken over the military from within. Though Alawites constituted just 12

percent of the Syrian population, they now dominated the corps of young officers.

Another coup followed in 1966. But the coup of 1970, which brought an Alawite air-force officer, Hafez al-Assad, to power, was what finally ended the instability that had reigned in Syria since the advent of independence.

ASSAD HAS NOW remained in power for twenty-two years. Considering that Damascus saw twenty-one changes of government in the twenty-four years preceding his coup, Assad's permanence is impressive. It is still more impressive when one realizes that he belongs to Syria's most-hated ethnic group—the group that has historically been suspect-

ed by other Syrians of sympathizing with the French, the Christians, and even the Jews. Daniel Pipes, a Middle East historian, writes in *Greater Syria*, "An Alawi ruling Syria is like an untouchable becoming maharajah in India or a Jew becoming tsar in Russia—an unprecedented development shocking to the majority population which had monopolized power for so many centuries."

One rarely stated reason for the longevity of Assad's regime—which also applies to other Arab dictators who arose around the same time, like Muammar Qaddafi, in Libya, and Saddam Hussein, in Iraq—is his use of state-of-the-art electronic surveillance techniques and Soviet-bloc security advisers: powerful, sometimes lethal tools that had not been available to earlier dictators. (American diplomats familiar with Syria in the 1950s describe it as a charming banana republic, where the government's attempts at surveillance had an amateurish, comic-opera quality to them.) Assad's extraordinary skill as a leader is another reason why he has survived. For example, by patient trial and error over the past seventeen years, he has won for himself the role of *de facto* military overlord in Lebanon, thus effectively undoing the

French crime of separating Lebanon from the Syrian motherland.

However, Assad's leadership ability notwithstanding, historical evidence suggests that the Assad era, like the rule of communists in Eastern Europe, is more a historical intermission than an indication of enduring national unity.

The city of Hama, a traditional bastion of Sunni Arab strength, is a case in point. In 1964 a revolt in Hama almost toppled the then current Ba'athist regime, top-heavy with Alawites. Finally, in February of 1982, the Sunni Arab Muslim Brotherhood took control of the city and murdered its Alawite-appointed officials. Sunni renegades had earlier massacred Alawite soldiers in Aleppo. The roots of this violence lay in age-old ethnic distrust, aggravated by Assad's support during the late 1970s of Maronite Christian militias in Lebanon, which Sunnis in Syria saw as yet another Alawite-Christian conspiracy against them. Assad reacted by sending 12,000 Alawite soldiers into Hama. They massacred as many as 30,000 Sunni Arab civilians and leveled much of the town. Hama in 1982 was proof that beneath the carapace of Assad's stable rule lay a seething region that was no closer to nationhood than it had been after the Turks left, or after the French left.

Assad, though only in his early sixties, has often been reported to be in ill health. However long he survives, Syria faces a day of reckoning when his control over the country weakens. Though the American media occupy themselves with Assad's current shift toward moderation—Syria's participation in the peace talks, its more civilized attitude toward Syrian Jews, and its seeming abstinence from anti-Western terrorism—the question remains: Given Syria's history up to this moment, do any of these policy changes really matter? Syria, it is to be remembered, is part of the same world as Yugoslavia: a former Ottoman territory that has yet to come to terms with the problems of post-Ottoman boundaries.

Future scenarios for Syria resemble those predicted for Yugoslavia during the Cold War years. From the standpoint of the present, the scenarios always seem implausible. But from the standpoint of historical process and precedent, they seem inevitable.

Syria will not remain the same. It could become bigger or smaller, but

the chance that any territorial solution will prove truly workable is slim indeed. Some Middle East specialists mutter about the possibility that a future Alawite state will be carved out of Syria. Based in mountainous Latakia, it would be a refuge for Alawites after Assad passes from the scene and Muslim fundamentalists—Sunnis, that is—take over the government. This state would be supported not only by Lebanese Maronites but also by the Israeli Secret Service, which would see no contradiction in aiding former members of Assad's regime against a Sunni Arab government in Damascus. Some Syrians, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, look forward to the collapse of both Israel and Jordan and their reintegration into Syria, as they waited in the 1940s for the incorporation into Syria of the autonomous states in Latakia and Jabal Druze. Should Assad's death lead to chaos in Damascus, it is not out of the question that the region of Jabal Druze would break away from Syria and amalgamate itself with Jordan. Because Lebanon's current stability rests upon Syrian military domination there, a weakening of government institutions in Syria could result in a renewal of the Lebanese civil war.

What Syria deep down yearns for—what would assuage its insoluble contradictions—is to duplicate the process now under way in the Balkans. That is, it wishes to repeal the political results of the twentieth century—in Syria's case, the border arrangements made by Great Britain and France after the First World War. In the Balkans, of course, "repeal" means the fragmentation of a larger whole into its constituent parts, and that fragmentation is proceeding apace. In Syria it means the opposite: the reconstitution of the whole out of its constituent parts. Indeed, Syria wishes to return to a world where, as Daniel Pipes says, it could be subsumed into an even larger whole and become "a region that exists outside politics." This, after all, is what lies behind its calls for "Arab unity." And nothing of the sort will happen.

For the moment, then, Assad staves off the future. It is Assad, not Saddam Hussein or any other ruler, who defines the era in which the Middle East now lives. And Assad's passing may herald more chaos than a chaotic region has seen in decades.

—Robert D. Kaplan

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"An absolutely Russian person": Suzanne Massie in her adopted city of St. Petersburg

RUSSIA

Agent of Influence

Around St. Petersburg with the woman who warmed Ronald Reagan's feelings toward the erstwhile "evil empire"

SUZANNE MASSIE, boisterous and voluble as we drove through her adopted neighborhood in St. Petersburg, hurtled to a sudden stop. She was laughing uproariously to see the spot where, five years earlier, her rented car had fallen apart and a wheel had rolled out into the Mars Field. "My first thought was *de-fi-cit*, as the Russians say—shortage! They warn you it's your nickel if the windshield wipers get stolen, but where was I going to get a tire? My second thought: I could have been killed! My third thought: This is a totalitarian state! Where are the police? And then there they were, three military men, with the equivalent in Russian of 'Honey, don't give it a thought.' When they asked where I was from and I said America, they said: 'Well, tell Reagan we ain't all awful.' And, you know, I did tell Reagan, and he loved it."

I was motoring south on Moskovsky Prospekt with the vernacularly bilingual, prodigiously energetic historian who held twenty unpublicized tutorial sessions with Ronald Reagan from 1984 to 1988. She coached him in the famous Russian proverbs ("*Doverai, no proverai*"—"Trust, but verify") that Reagan loved quoting to Mikhail Gorbachev, and she seems to have taught our sometimes sleepy, brittle old President a critical lesson of his second term: that he could hate communism and love the Russian people in one impulse.

I was in Russia to trail this swash-buckling phenomenon, from sickroom to sacred concert, from market to baptism—to confirm with my own eyes a legend in the making, about The Woman Who Ended the Cold War.

The first blossom of the legend is *Better to Light a Candle*, a seventy-minute documentary from Leningrad Films about Massie and her twenty-five-year romance with the people and the culture caught in the Soviet cage, which was shown recently on Russian television. "She is an absolutely Russian person," observes the film's director, Mikhail Litviakov. "Never in her life here has she been approached by a black marketeer or people of this kind, because she looks like a Russian woman. She is ours. She may have more friends in Leningrad than in the United States, and she will have to organize her own post office after people see this

film, because she will get so many letters."

But Suzanne Massie is ours, too: a Vassar student in the 1950s, a popular magazine writer in the sixties, a collaborator with her husband, Robert Massie, on his best-selling *Nicholas and Alexandra* (1967), and, currently, a fellow at Harvard University's Russian Research Center. She wrote *Land of the Firebird* (1980), a survey and celebration of Russian art, and *Pavlovsk* (1990), about the history and near-miraculous resurrection of an eighteenth-century royal palace, out of the ashes left by the Nazis and back to mint condition.

She captured Ronald Reagan with something more than art history. She fed him street-corner anecdotes from the stumbling Soviet Union and talked with him about the character and everyday life of the Russian people. She impressed on him, for example, that "Russia is a matriarchy ruled by men," and she cued one of Reagan's resonant lines on his visit to Moscow in 1988: "One of the most wonderful forces for stability and good that I have seen in the Soviet Union are the Russian women." Massie had told him, she recalls, "They are fifty-one percent of the work force, and they're not just looking after the drunks. *Perestroika* cannot succeed without them."

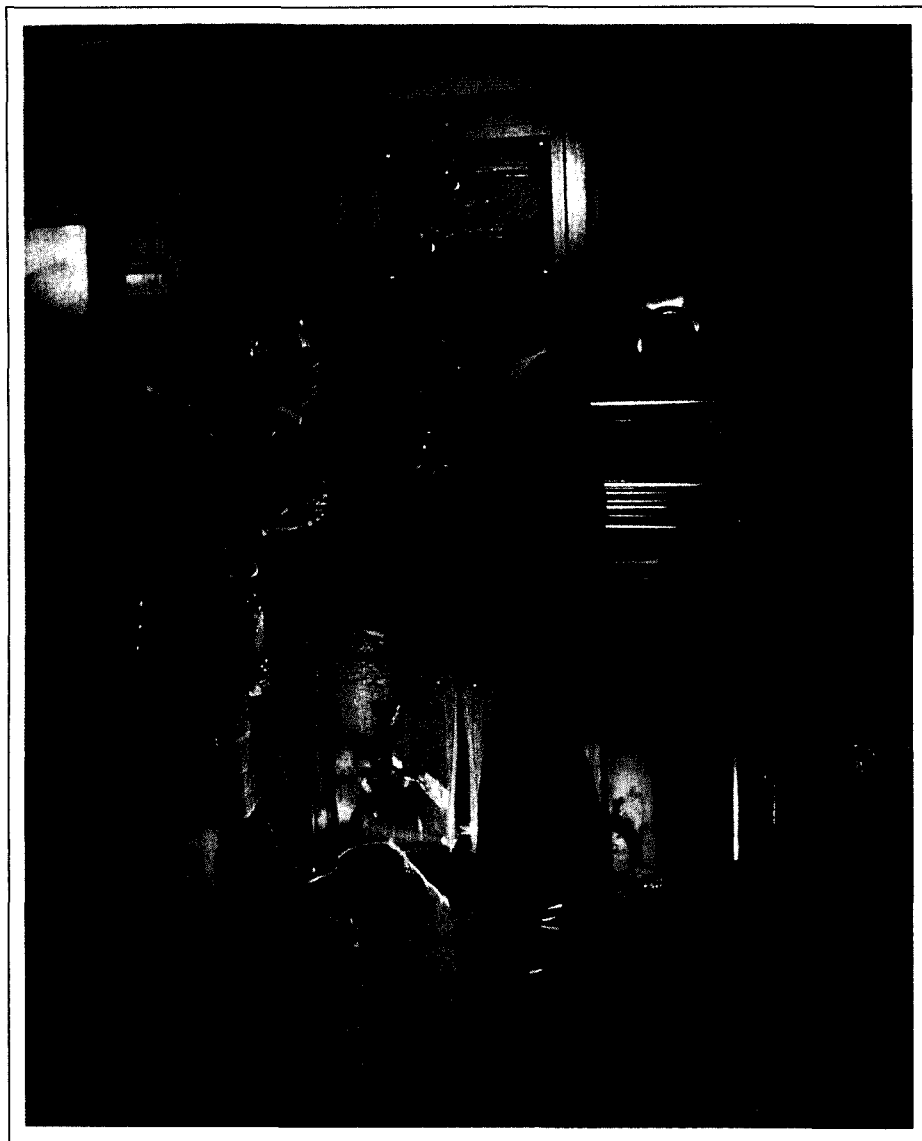
There is a hint in Massie's many returns to the Oval Office that Ronald Reagan possessed more intellectual curiosity than he got credit for. There is also a hint of Massie's riveting salesmanship. I first fancied that it must have been something like the monk Rasputin's hypnotic grip on the last Romanovs. But Reagan's national-security adviser, Robert McFarlane, who introduced Massie to the President, corrected me recently. "She's more Scheherazade, weaving a web of stories—not exactly to save her life but to build Reagan's interest," McFarlane said. He knew right away it was working. "She was talking his wavelength about people. She's an absorbing person. Her language is salty. She can be severe in her criticism. Reagan began to lean forward."

"Before she arrived," McFarlane remembered, "he was disdaining the whole problem—in effect, 'Why should we bother with a lot of Com-mies?' But to get him interested in the human dimensions of the Russians was to engage him. Human beings he relat-



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*— Sandy Milne,
our Resident Sage.*



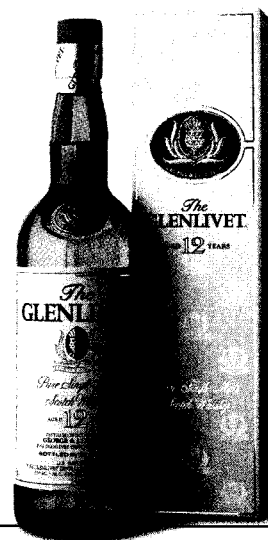
Sandy Milne holding forth on the pistols.

The men, a brutish lot, were clearly intent on dirty doings.

The scene was the desolate inn at Cock Bridge, in the Highlands. George Smith, maker of The Glenlivet single malt Scotch, was on his way home from a sale of his much prized whisky, his money belt stuffed with gold sovereigns.

Also at George's belt, fortunately, were a pair of hair-trigger pistols, given him by the laird of Aberlour. Before the men could jump him, he cocked one of the pistols and fired into the peat fire. A cloud of white ash filled the room. By the time it had cleared, George was on his horse and well away.

“If that pistol had misfired,” says our Sandy Milne, “there might not be such a thing today as The Glenlivet. A thought horrible to contemplate.”



— What is a single malt Scotch? —

A single malt is Scotch the way it was originally: one single whisky, from one single distillery. Not, like most Scotch today, a blend of many whiskies. The Glenlivet single malt Scotch whisky should therefore be compared to a château-bottled wine. Blended Scotch is more like a mixture of wines from different vineyards.

**The Glenlivet.
The Father of All Scotch.**

ed to. One way to motivate him was to paint for him this stunning mass of humanity and convince him he could do something about it."

SUZANNE MASSIE first came to the Soviet Union in 1967. For ten years before that her life had been ruled by the panic and cruel pain of her son Bobby's hemophilia. It was the genetic and medical mystery of the "royal" blood disease that prompted Massie and her husband to research Nicholas, Alexandra, and the stricken Czarevich Alexis. It was her son's cerebral hemorrhage that prompted Suzanne to find a challenging distraction: learning Russian. What she learned even faster than the language was that although her ancestry is Swiss (her father was the Swiss consul-general in Philadelphia), her karma, her enthusiasms, her poetic sympathies, had been Russian all along. On her first visit, twenty-five years ago, she came to this realization: "I had been traveling toward this land for a very long time." And she was overwhelmed by a feeling of communion with ordinary Russians, an empathy for their suffering in response to state terror, which was not unlike her response to the arbitrary torment and internal bleeding of hemophilia. "We shared the reflexes of people who live with fear," she wrote in *Journey*, the family account of Bobby's growing up. (The Massies, long separated, are now divorced. Bobby, an Episcopal minister in Boston, is thirty-six, married, and the father of two sons.) When she discovered Leningrad

in 1967, Massie wrote, "it was like finding a huge family that belonged to me, but that I had never known existed."

Poets in particular led her "through the looking glass that separates foreigners from Russians and Russian life." She repaid the favor with *The Living Mirror* (1972), an anthology celebrating five young poets of Leningrad, including Joseph Brodsky, who later became the poet laureate of the United States.

In 1972 Massie's application for a visa to return to the Soviet Union was denied. In the early 1980s, after *Land of the Firebird* was published, she challenged her Soviet contact in Washington: "Let's face it—any other country would have given me a medal for the books I've written about you." Her contact invited her to inscribe a copy to the short-lived President Yuri Andropov. She wrote, "To Yuri Vladimirovich . . . with hope for the future of the Great Russian Land"—not the Soviet Union. Finally her visa was cleared for September of 1983, the same unhappy month in which the Soviets shot down a Korean airliner flying from the United States and the last deep freeze of the Cold War began. Massie flew back from that visit with the doomsday pronouncements of a man she understood to be a KGB general pounding in her ears: "You don't know," he had said, "how close war *is*." Immediately she repaired to her best Republican friend in the U.S. Senate, William Cohen, of Maine. "This was not the usual Soviet truculence," she remembers telling Cohen. "Even if we just recite the multiplica-

tion tables, we've got to start talking again." It became the Massie initiative to resume the cultural dialogue that President Jimmy Carter had broken off upon the invasion of Afghanistan. Cohen introduced Massie to McFarlane, and in January of 1984 McFarlane ushered her in to see the President. She frames him now from a Russian perspective: "Remember, Reagan had qualities that Russians admire in their normal life. He was patriotic. He was direct. He was a kind of American icon that Russians understood. They would explain to me: Reagan is Cowboy. And a lot of them loved him for that.

"The very first thing he asked me was How much do their leaders believe in communism? Not a dumb question, either. I said, 'Of course, Mr. President, I can only tell you what the Russians say—that their rulers love only their chairs.' I said, 'They call them the Big Bottoms. They care only about their chairs, their place.' And so our conversations began."

ON MY FIRST night in St. Petersburg, Massie led the way to Smolny Cathedral, Francesco Rastrelli's eighteenth-century Russian Baroque masterpiece, which the Communists had closed. It was opening night of the first festival of liturgical music since the 1917 Revolution, and performances of Rachmaninoff's *Vespers* and the new Russian national anthem were under way.

As the president of the Friends of Pavlovsk, an international organization she founded to help finish the restoration and relighting of her favorite palace, Massie was being petitioned by the mayor and council of the town of Pavlovsk to become its redevelopment director. Pavlovsk is a perfect candidate, in fact, to be Russia's Williamsburg—not just a tourist town but a hub of furniture and textile design, recycling authentic eighteenth-century patterns for modern consumers of a certain taste. So Pavlovsk presented an invitation to be pondered seriously, albeit on the run. For there were many old friends to see, and pots of jam from her Maine homestead to exchange for Russian jam.

She had been trading homemade preserves for years with a restorer of paintings at the Hermitage museum, and they had an emotional reunion at midweek, laughing about visits past. "One

(Continued on page 39)

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A 1984 Oval Office tutorial with the President and his national-security adviser

PREVIEW



FEBRUARY 1993
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

INSIDE:

**THE HUMANA FESTIVAL'S
17TH YEAR**

**NEW YORK'S HOTTEST
SHOWS**

OPERA ON COMPACT DISC

**TOSCANINI
RETROSPECTIVE**

**ISLAND MUSIC FOR
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**HIDDEN FILM TALENT FROM
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**MICHELLE PFEIFFER IN
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DANCE AND THEATER

by Laura Jacobs and Austin Baer

LOUISVILLE'S LEGEND-MAKING

What are America's playwrights thinking about? Find out at the Humana Festival at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, now in its seventeenth year. From February 25 to April 4, producing director Jon Jory presents evenings of up-to-the-minute drama, including the pick of hundreds upon hundreds of submissions plus imaginative commissions. "We

get plays any way we can," says the literary director, Michael Bigelow Dixon, and apparently there is no shortage. "My festival," says Dixon wistfully, "is 100 plays. Jon Jory's is 10." The festival's record is impressive. The first year featured *The Gin Game*, subsequently a vehicle for Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy; last season saw José Rivera's *Marisol*, which is now taking regional theaters by storm. In between came *Agnes of God*, *Extremities*, *Crimes of the Heart*, and much more. Small wonder that national and foreign talent scouts from theater, television, and movie studios descend on Louisville this time of year—especially in March, when the festival's entire program can be seen in a single weekend. —A.B.



Marisol



Extremities

A GOOD YEAR

Nineteen-sixty wasn't a bad year for George Balanchine: it saw him choreographing the magisterial *Monumentum pro Gesualdo*, the monumental *Liebeslieder Walzer*. Even his throwaways were winners. *Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux* and *Donizetti Variations* may not have been masterpieces, but today they are among his most-performed ballets. *Tchai Pas* requires powerhouse principals—it's a grand showoff. Sweeter and more cozily scaled, *Donizetti* has been called Balanchine's Bournonville ballet. But it's got Mr. B's sly wit: a fickle ballerina, an insubordinate soloist, and pirouettes designed to lift the girls' skirts! *Donizetti* was at the New York City Ballet (January 22 and 30) and will be at Fort Worth Ballet (February 12 to 14). *Tchai Pas* is on San Francisco Ballet's all-Balanchine program, which pops up twice each month, now through April. —L.J.

IN A NUTSHELL

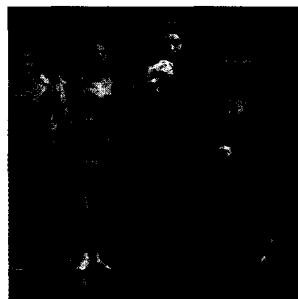
Is the future of American classical dance nestled in the studios of Ballet Chicago? Artistic director Daniel Duell has a New York City Ballet pedigree, but not the tunnel vision. His house choreographer, Gordon Peirce Schmidt, is no ersatz Balanchine, but a dancemaker with his own mind—he came to dance from college study in horticulture! And company style is fresh and fine. This month Ballet Chicago presents Schmidt's latest hit, *In a Nutshell* (to Duke Ellington's *Nutcracker*), at Chicago's Civic Opera House, February 25 to 27. The company then tours California in March, and returns to Chicago in May with a program featuring at least two Schmidt pieces. —L.J.

A GLORIOUS GAMACHE

Vadim Strukov's fluttering handkerchief has more inner life, more snapping synapses, than most dancers know in a whole career. As Gamache, the upstart aristocrat in the Boston Ballet's production of *Don Quixote*, Strukov is the spirit of Sylvester in the body of the Baroque—a coy, squeamish, peevish prince of darkness. Gamache, of course, is a character role, but with Strukov up there in shiny black satin it's a comic tour de force, a storm warning. He fusses, faints,

gossips, guffaws, flaps his umbrella like an old rooster, primps and coos like a big baby under a powder-puff cloud. The stage is his vanity—when he's not there you miss the reflection, the Pierrot-white pancake and the pink cheeks. Strukov (St. Petersburg-born and Kirov-trained) reprises the role of Gamache February 11 to 21 when the Boston Ballet presents *Don Quixote* at the Wang Center, in Boston.

Now, will somebody please cast this man as Carabosse? —L.J.



Strukov in *Don Quixote*

SOME GOOD ADVICE: PAY NOW, PLAY LATER

If you hope to catch up with this season's hot New York shows before heading for the beach, act now. *The Sisters Rosensweig*, the latest from Wendy Wasserstein (author of *The Heidi Chronicles*), has been playing to sellout crowds at Lincoln Center's 299-seat Newhouse Theater since before its official opening, in October. Such was the crush for Wasserstein's contemporary gloss on Chekhov that even plenty of critics were shut out. Tickets for the open run at Broadway's 1,096-seat Barrymore (beginning March 4) have been moving fast since October. The Los Ange-

les production of Tony Kushner's two-part "Gay Fantasia on National Themes," *Angels in America*, promised in a limited off-Broadway run this month, has been scrapped. Watch instead for a new staging of it by the blazingly original George C. Wolfe (of *Jelly's Last Jam*). Part I opens on Broadway in late April. Part II, now in rewrite, will follow when ready. And if you want to have a prayer of seeing *Putting It Together* (March 2 to May 23), the new Sondheim omnibus at the Manhattan Theater Club, you must rush to the box office in person as early as possible

this month (no phone sales; limit of two tickets per customer). The director is Sondheim alumna extraordinaire Julia MacKenzie, the Witch of London's *Into the Woods*. The crackerjack cast includes not only James Naughton, Chris Durang, Michael Rupert, and Rachel York, but also a Sondheim neophyte best remembered as Eliza Doolittle, Maria von Trapp, and Mary Poppins: Julie Andrews. —A.B.

Laura Jacobs is the editor-in-chief of Stagebill.

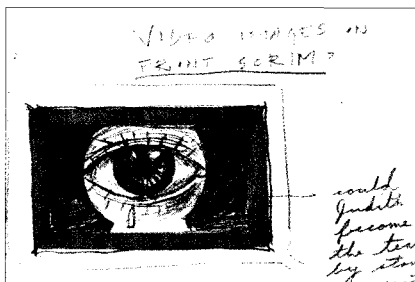
Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Austin Baer

A SECOND MATCH MADE IN OPERA HEAVEN?

Are *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Erwartung* on their way to becoming the twenty-first century's *Cav* and *Pag*? The fit of each to the other is uncanny. In one hypnotic hour of Bartók, Duke Bluebeard's fourth bride, Judith, probes her new husband's soul, unlocking the seven fateful doors of his symbolic castle, condemning herself and him to everlasting loneliness. Schönberg's brief, fiendishly difficult monodrama finds a distraught woman (called The Woman) lost in a wood, where she stumbles across the corpse of her lover. Who has killed him? The Woman? Who can tell? The enigmas of *Erwartung* ("Anticipation") follow the arc of *Bluebeard* into regions still more private, more unknown. In January, the Canadian Opera Company unveiled a new production of the two operas in Toronto, with three performances to follow this month at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The show marks the operatic debut of the Québécois director Robert Lepage, currently the toast of London and Paris for his bracingly fresh



Set-design sketch for *Bluebeard*

productions of Shakespeare, not to mention plays of his own (in which he also performs, in French and English). If only two seasons ago the Metropolitan Opera had not mounted and even telecast this very double bill as a tour de force for Jessye Norman! Is the trip to BAM a case of coals to Bluecastle? "I don't think even the Met would pretend that they did these works well," says Richard Bradshaw, the COC's music director. "And if you have a fairly burning vision, which we have..."

A CASE FOR TOSCANINI

Arturo Toscanini (1867–1957). Beyond our poor power to add or to detract, his achievements endure. Now his recorded legacy on the RCA Victor Gold Seal label—fiery, poetic, broad, deep, and precise—has been reissued on compact disc in its entirety: 82 discs in 71 volumes spanning 34 years. The alphabetical listing of composers runs from Bach to Wolf-Fer-

rari by way, most notably, of Beethoven, Brahms, Debussy, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, and Wagner. Each volume is available separately, but the 5,000 customers who order the limited-edition complete set get a bonus: a trim hardwood display case, custom-made, its glass door embossed with the maestro's signature in gold.

NO MORE PIRATES

Once upon a time live opera recordings were mostly pirate jobs. These days, the major labels are horn-ing in on the pirates' business. In the best cases, the results for home listeners are discs with the excitement you often don't get in the recording studio and sound quality you simply never get from a cassette player under an overcoat. Sony Classical, with the gung-ho attitude befitting the latest contender in the big leagues, has been paying particular attention to the international

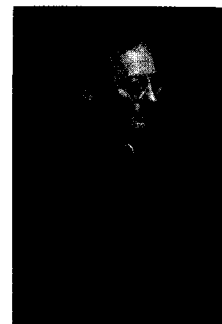


War and Peace at the Seattle Opera

Iphigénie en Tauride, from La Scala, starring Carol Vaness under the baton of Riccardo Muti; and Prokofiev's ambitious *War and Peace*, after Tolstoy, of course, from the Seattle Opera (also soon to be available on video). Curtain time!

BLOW, WINTER WIND

Nicholas McGegan, a harpsichordist and conductor whose crisp investigations especially of Handel have met with ecstatic reviews and brisk record sales, now turns his mind to re-creations of another sort. His Arcadian Academy revives the name and the concerns of the Roman Accademia dell'Arcadia, an aristocratic society founded on the eve of the eighteenth century to invigorate Italian culture. The new group's first tour (January 29 to February 8) features one-night visits to Kingston, Rhode Island; Baltimore; Lancaster, Pennsylvania (Franklin and Marshall College); Cleveland; Greenwich, Connecticut; and Washington, D.C. (Dumbarton Oaks). During a two-day stop at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the group will present an expanded program. In addition to instrumental and vocal music, there are poetry readings and an afternoon of lectures on the themes of love and pastoral. An escape to Arcadia while at home the cold winds blow!



Nicholas McGegan

MEET MS. MENTZER

Operatic egos being what they are, the star-studded cast of the Metropolitan Opera's *Tales of Hoffmann* this year was not as amused as it might have been by the little joke that this time the piece should have been billed as *Tales of Nicklausse*. In this mercilessly protracted revival of Offenbach's never-finished, much-edited score, the poet-hero's sidekick (actually the Muse, his guardian spirit, disguised as a youth) had one extra lick after another. Had it not been for Susanne Mentzer's nimble, unaffected grace, her presence would have become tiresome indeed. As it was, she was the exquisite icing on a soggy cake. Mentzer repeats the part at the Met this month (broadcast live on the Texaco Metropolitan Opera Radio network at 1:30 p.m. EST February 13). For those who have fallen under her spell, the even better news is the announcement of her New York recital debut at Carnegie Hall (February 19).

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

POPULAR MUSIC AND JAZZ

by Charles M. Young and Bob Blumenthal

NOT JUST FOR RESTING COLD DRINKS ON

One of the first black vocal groups to achieve mass acceptance among white teenagers in the rock era, the Coasters connected through the natural art form of all powerless minority groups: satire. Their greatest hits have been collected in the original mono on *50 Coastin' Classics* (Rhino/Atlantic & Atco Remasters), and it's a study in musical comedy that remains fresh, hilarious, and extremely catchy to this day. Indeed, some of the themes are so fresh that their songs have a subtext of tragedy. "Riot in Cell Block #9" and "Framed" (recorded when the Coasters were still the Robins) cut a bit too close to the bone in their critique of white justice in the black community and were little heard on mainstream radio in their day. Hearing them now one cannot help being reminded of today's rappers dealing with the same issues and how little things have changed in the inner city.



The Coasters

The Coasters enjoyed their greatest success with songs like "Charlie Brown" (a celebration of the class screw-up), "Yakety Yak" (attitude in the face of parental oppression), "Along Came Jones" (a parody of movie heroes), and the double-sided hit "Searchin'" and "Young Blood" (alienation and young lust) which made it into just about every teenage collection of 45s in 1957. Almost their entire catalogue was written and produced by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, surely one of the greatest and most quintessentially American songwriting-producing teams, but it was the exquisite comic timing and inflection of the Coasters themselves—Carl Gardner, Leon Hughes, Billy Guy, and Bobby Nunn—that gave these songs such life as short stories. Even the saxophone solos—that's King Curtis stuttering on "Yakety Yak"—will make you laugh out loud.

—C.M.Y.

SEEKING SANCTUARY

How is a listener to keep up with the prolific David Murray, who records for three labels, each of which takes a distinct approach to the tenor saxophonist? Japan's DIW, a generous underwriter, presents *Special Quartet*, where pianist McCoy Tyner and drummer Elvin Jones do little more than meet Murray's fervor halfway. Commercialism on a budget is the rule at Red Baron, with producer Bob Thiele favoring pretentiously disguised blowing sessions like *MX*, ostensibly "dedicated to the memory of Malcolm X," yet merely an excuse to jam on the blues and other familiar forms. As such efforts go, it works fairly well, with strong Bobby Bradford cornet and John Hicks piano, plus the tenor of John Coltrane's son Ravi as methodical antithesis to Murray's ram-bunctious attack. Italy's Black Saint provides the most creative leeway, resulting in the superior Murray album *A Sanctuary Within*, a quartet program of diverse moods enlivened by drummer Sunny Murray and percussionist Kahil El'Zabar. "You gotta make money to play music," Murray explains in the liner notes, when asked about his more calculated efforts elsewhere. On *A Sanctuary Within*, he also gets a better shot at making art.

—B.B.

MARLEY'S MOM

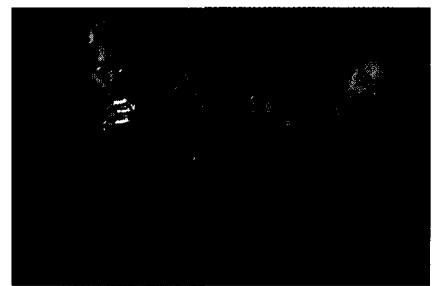
If you're buying music for younger listeners, you may want to check out *Smilin' Island of Song* (Music for Little People), by Cedella Marley Booker, mother of reggae great Bob Marley. Mother Booker takes a young American visitor, "Jenny" (sung by 16-year-old Kandice Love), on a journey by donkey across Jamaica, dispensing wisdom, geographical factoids, humor, and music in a mixture that should delight Mom and Dad as much as any toddler. Stellar backup musicians, including Taj Mahal and David Lindley, keep the songs interesting, but the real star is Mother Booker, who demonstrates beyond all doubt where her son got his charisma. The fate of "Ooey Gooley the Silly Worm" is frightening—but any kid who crosses the street without Mom ought to be a little frightened.

—C.M.Y.



A SERIOUS STAIN FROM LIVING COLOUR

As cofounder of the Black Rock Coalition and guitarist/lyricist of Living Colour, Vernon Reid has always been concerned with larger social and political issues. Living Colour's main hit from their first album was "Cult of Personality," an examination of totalitarian sociology that stood out amidst the glam metal of the day and prefigured the more serious concerns of the currently popular grunge metal. On *Stain* (Epic), their third album, Reid combines his tub-thumping demands that his audience wake up and educate itself ("Ignorance Is Bliss") with more personal concerns, like the mysterious mixtures of sexuality that we all are ("Bi"). New bassist Doug Wimbish, former leader of Tackhead, is content to reinforce the riff much of the time but can branch off into spectacular lines when the moment calls for it. Producer Ron St. Germain (who has worked with Soundgarden and Sonic Youth) has apparently inspired the band to try some keyboards and sampling, but the main appeal remains Reid's jazz-metal guitar, sometimes soaring and sometimes jarring. If he



Living Colour

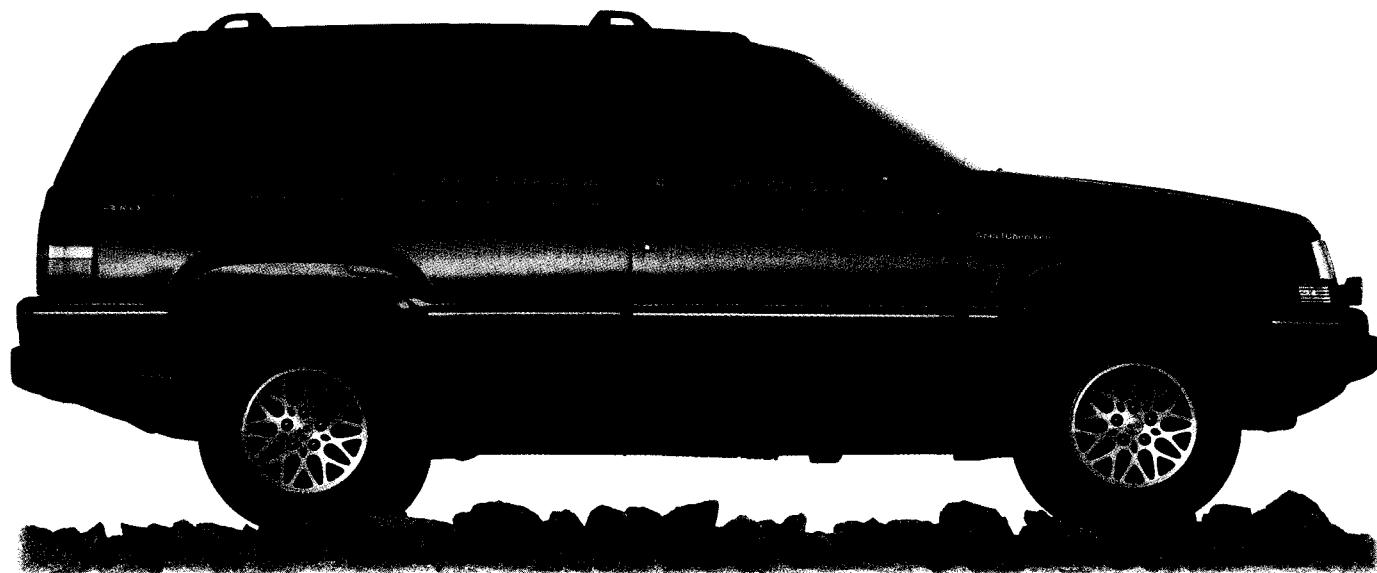
influenced grunge, then grunge has influenced him. This is the most riff-based of his albums, offering the average headbanger more bangs for his CD dollar. Most accessible cut: "Never Satisfied," sort of a post-modern blend of "Satisfaction" and "Can't Be Satisfied," about a guy in the throes of consumer psychology.

—C.M.Y.

Charles M. Young is the executive editor of *Musician* magazine.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe.

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FILM

by Henry Sheehan

HONG KONG, BUT NOT FOR LONG

Most U.S. filmgoers probably regard Hong Kong cinema as what *Variety* used to call "chop sockey"—low-budget kung-fu fare. Martial arts do very often play a strong part in Hong Kong films, but that eastern industry has been turning out broad entertainments with a dash and zing all their own. You can see many of these films at the cinemas that dot America's Chinatowns, discover gems amid the more disreputable action racks at local video stores, or find laser discs at Chinese-language video outlets (check for subtitling).

The most remarkable Hong Kong filmmaker is Jackie Chan, an action comedian whom admirers have justly compared to Buster Keaton. Chan's athletic virtuosity is all but indescribable: several times he has staged fights completely above ground, swinging from rafters, and in his commercial blockbuster *Police Force* (also known as *Jackie Chan's Police Force* or *Police Story*) he chases a hijacked speeding bus on foot and clambors aboard it while fighting the gangsters on board—no doubles, no tricks. All the while, his face sketches a comic wonder at his own agility. Chan,

along with sometime collaborator Sammo Hung, were among the last graduates of one of the Peking Opera schools in which boys from poor families were taught fantastic acrobatic skills in return for room and board. When the schools were closed, the students gravitated to Hong Kong, a story dramatized in the poignant *Painted Faces*.

Hong Kong's latest wunderkind is Tsui Hark, a producer-director whose eye-popping masterpiece is *Peking Opera Blues*. Set in 1913, the film relates the adventures of three women embroiled in revolutionary politics in Shanghai. The action involves some of the most stupendously choreographed, furiously edited, and colorful scenes ever committed to film.

As you read this, director John Woo should be putting the finishing touches on *Hard Target* (to be released this summer). The feature stars Jean-Claude Van Damme and is a potential bridgehead for the exodus of Hong Kong movie talent, anticipated in 1997. Until then, search and enjoy.

Henry Sheehan writes on film for L.A. Weekly and The Hollywood Reporter.

AROUND THE WORLD IN TRAILERS

Zhang Yimou, the independent-minded Chinese filmmaker who impressed U.S. audiences last year with *Raise the Red Lantern*, returns with *The Story of Qiu Ju*, a Gogol-esque tale of rural legalism set in the present-day Chinese hinterland. Starring for Zhang once again, glamorous Gong Li, her voluptuousness hidden underneath actorly peasant garb, plays a farmer's wife who implacably seeks an "explanation" for her village chief's assault on her husband.

Agnieszka Holland's *Olivier, Olivier* (her first film since *Europa, Europa*) is more somber still, the story of a French family torn asunder by the disappearance of the nine-year-old son. When, six years later, he dramatically reappears, relief is offset by doubts—especially those of a sister who finds herself incestuously propositioned. An emotionally provocative, if unsatisfactorily resolved, film.

John Turturro has used his directorial debut, *Mac*, to craft a tribute to his father, a Queens contractor who crashed the



Agnieszka Holland's *Olivier, Olivier*

post-war Long Island home-building boom. Surprisingly for both an actor and a son, Turturro (who also stars) has a broad, almost crude sense of ethnic characterization, and his grasp of scene structure is, more understandably, shaky. However, the

film's honest appreciation for workmanship is a rare commodity and the film should be a nostalgic kick for anyone who grew up in the suburban Northeast.

ORION'S BRIGHT STAR



Pfeiffer and Haysbert in *Love Field*

When Orion Pictures sank into receivership, a year ago, *Love Field*, a much-talked-about feature starring Michelle Pfeiffer as a Dallas housewife whose life is undone in the aftermath of the Kennedy assassination, went down with the ship. The film has now popped back to the surface with the Orion reorganization, and it turns out to have been a sunken treasure.

Pfeiffer plays a nervously unstable woman whose obsession with Jack and Jackie has recently been intensified by the death of her newborn. Abandoning her frustrated husband, she sets out by bus to Washington, D.C., determined to make the funeral; on the way, she meets a black man, Paul Cater, and his mysteriously silent young daughter. Director Jonathan Kaplan (*The Accused*) has long been Hollywood's most articulate exponent of the ways Americans simultaneously build and breach class and racial barriers, and working from a sparsely eloquent screenplay by Don Roos, he has fleshed out a map of human detours and connections against a forbidding social geography. As Cater, newcomer Dennis Haysbert complements Pfeiffer's elegantly limned confusion with coiled suspicion. Louise Latham, as an old woman who gives the trio shelter, caps the collection of perfect performances.



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Next month in these pages: Austin Baer reports on the November A&E poll results.



(Continued from page 30)

day I came into his wonderful studio," Massie remembers. "He looked up from an ancient canvas and ran his little wad of cotton under my nose and said, 'This—smell it—this is what the fifteenth century smells like.'"

In the dusky depression of a crumbling empire, in the cold and uncertainty of winter, her friends kept heaping flowers on Suzanne Massie. She returned the favor with gestures of intimacy that got to the heart of historic beauty and blessedness. I am thinking particularly of a visit we made to the secret storeroom for czarist carriages and furniture in the Winter Palace.

Vladimir is the curator of the carriage collection and a typical representative of the art restorers who form one of Massie's networks. These are golden-handed craftspeople who, often on their own time, have patched and guarded the cultural legacy of Russia. Vladimir's generation are the children of the men and women who crated and shipped to the hinterlands more than a million pieces from the Hermitage as the Nazis swarmed toward Leningrad in 1941. Through the final years of communism the restorers remained a spirited little brotherhood guarding memory from oblivion; by the end of 1991 they knew they were winning the battle for history against the enfeebled myth of a "new Soviet man."

Down catacomb corridors, past locked steel doors, Vladimir's carriage warehouse, in a sub-basement of the Winter Palace, is his pride and joy, and the stuff of fairy tales. Suddenly Vladimir was inviting Massie to take a seat in the coronation coach of Alexander II, from 1856. We were groping in a huge storeroom lit by a few dim bulbs. "Come back here," he shouted. "This is a coach given to Catherine the Great by her lover Count Orlov two years after she came to the throne, in 1762." We visitors were quickly giddy, almost drunk, in this astonishing czarist trove: Peter the Great's nine-foot armoire, hewn from Polish walnut; Catherine the Great's party sleigh, in which easily a dozen of her best friends might have taken a festive turn over the frozen Neva or around the block. Massie's favorite object was a coach made by a German master craftsman for the Empress Maria Feodorovna, the wife of Czar Paul and the woman who built Pavlovsk. It is a delicate carriage, with

silver-sequined embroidery on its red velvet inside and out, and with the decorations Maria Feodorovna loved: flowers, cherubim, and lithe caryatids. Massie seemed almost beside herself. "Is it not marvelous? My Empress rode in that. After Maria Feodorovna it became the most beloved carriage of all the Empresses, and I certainly do not blame them!"

A rich royalist echo seemed to have stolen into Massie's voice for a moment. But it was not czarist politics, I think, that had both of us gasping with excitement; it was Dostoevsky's dream, voiced by Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*, that "beauty will save the world!"

Vladimir was tugging her sleeve about another surprise he wanted to show her. He led us back to a courtyard window where we could see the roof of the Winter Palace chapel, which the Bolsheviks had closed. The golden cross over the chapel had recently been remounted; the news of recent days was that the Metropolitan of Petersburg had chosen a priest to restore worship there. For Vladimir this was more momentous than Moscow politics, but of course Massie made a connection. "You know when I knew things were changing?" she said to me. "When I started to see crosses popping up here and there in the early eighties. When there were suddenly more crosses than red flags, I knew it was all over."

I WAS WARMING to the notion that this is the way Suzanne Massie used to talk to Ronald Reagan: "Russia is no mystery," she began, as we spoke in her St. Petersburg apartment. "If you think of Russia as a woman, all this 'enigma' business disappears. If you think of her further as an abused woman, you can understand a lot of her psychology. An abused woman bows her head, stays out of his way, fools him when she can, but never, never changes her mind. The abusive male has been the communist system, but look around at these Russians and see the importance they give to religion and cultural life, to the values of humility and meekness and modesty and not striking back—again and again you are looking at female responses.

"The United States is another 'he' in this picture. We forget that Russians have always been gaga about the U.S., as far back as Catherine the Great, who offered George Washington some Cos-

sacks to fight the War of Independence. He declined, but the point is, this modern tension is anomalous. In twenty-five years out here I never once heard a word of hostility from a Russian man-on-the-street. They've always been curious, maybe bewildered, and sometimes afraid of us. But they were never hostile. During the Cold War years I got so annoyed at the truculent communication. Here was the U.S., very male and aggressive, saying, 'Well, my dear, I have this marvelous plan.' And she says, 'You never listen to me—you never take me seriously. I have good ideas too.' And he says, 'Of course you do, my dear. But you know, it's so obvious my way is the best way.' Bicker, bicker, bicker. And then suddenly he says the equivalent of 'Haven't you put on some weight lately?' or 'Gee, you ought to take care of yourself.' And she explodes—'He called me fat, he called me ugly'—and stomps off. But the attraction between them is so great that, of course, they always look back over their shoulders, they can't help it, and start back. I got so tired of this dance. I said, For God's sake, can't somebody find them a bed? Because these are people that communicate every way but verbally. I think one of the beds is space. Another is music—where communication is nonverbal. Van Cliburn understands all of this, and Russians understand an artist who has eleven grand pianos in his house and a refrigerator as big as a room. I mean, there's a lot in common between an expansive Texan and a Russian!

"I can be optimistic about Russians when I think of how resourceful they are. If they get the right tools now, we may just be surprised at how quickly they catch up. Remember what they did in painting and the novel, not to mention music and poetry. This is a country that had no secular artistic tradition at all till almost the start of the eighteenth century, and by the end of the nineteenth century they were leading the world in the arts, the spearpoint of twentieth-century consciousness. Especially in St. Petersburg, remember, this society was built on a fruitful connection between Russians and the West. That was the dream of Peter the Great and the dream of this city, which is younger than New York City, and just as cosmopolitan: it has always attracted the same diversity of nationalities and people seeking opportunity and fortune.

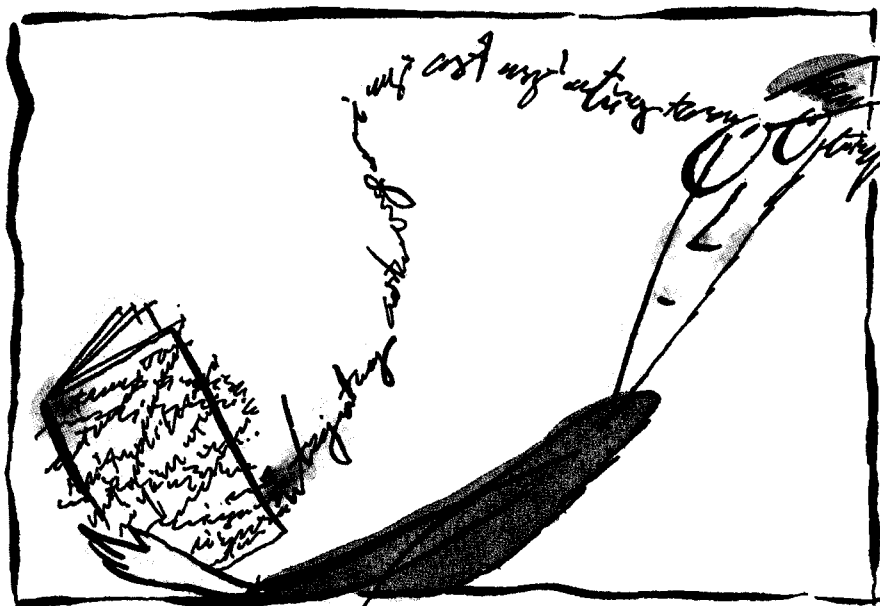
"Over a thousand years Russians

have had a lot of ups and downs. One could argue which was worse, the Mongol invasions or communism. The point is, they came through the Mongol period, and they have not succumbed to seventy years of communism either. Who else could have made it through this moral and spiritual assault? Russians today are not zombies. They are not mindless or without spirituality. I look at them as survivors of perhaps the greatest spiritual battle of the twentieth century. It is not nothing, after all, to have confronted both of the century's definitive monsters, Hitler and Stalin—who for different reasons were determined to wipe out the record, to oblit-

erate Russian cultural memory. But the Russians survived them, and they stayed human."

Mikhail Gorbachev reached wistfully for the same assurance in the last gasp of his resignation speech at Christmas in 1991. "We are heirs of a great civilization," he said, "and it now depends on all and everyone whether or not this civilization will make a comeback to a new and decent living today." It depends, as Suzanne Massie puts it more cheerfully, on the Russians' ravenous hunger for their own Church and culture. She is betting on the seeds under the snow of the Soviet century.

—Christopher Lydon



LEXICOGRAPHY

Odds and Ends

*Compilers of strange dictionaries
yearn for high purpose and
practical value*

THE LAST WORDS of Leo Tolstoy were plaintive and strangely compliant: "I do not understand what I have to do." The philosopher Friedrich von Schlegel was in the end tantalizing: "But the consummate and perfect knowledge—" reads the last entry in his last lecture, forever unfinished. The gangster "Dutch" Schultz left life delirious, sounding

like the staccato of a submachine gun. "Henry! Max!" he yelled. "Come over here. French Canadian bean soup. I want to pay. Let them leave me alone."

Dying words: like the last line of a long poem, they are profound because they are the end. Sometimes they mock the human condition. "God bless you all," Sir Walter Scott said to his family. "I feel myself again." And sometimes—often—they are unexpectedly apt. "I believe," Adam Smith said, "we must adjourn this meeting to some other place."

All this and more we can glean from Edward S. Le Comte's *Dictionary of Last Words*, one of the thousands of dictionaries compiled since some ancients produced an Akkadian-Sumerian word list in the seventh century B.C. Most of these books—which collect, describe, and classify words or facts—are practical. What is more use-

ful than a dictionary? Idiosyncratic dictionaries strive to be useful too. A person unable to dislodge the word on the tip of his tongue, for example, may find it in Theodore Bernstein's *Reverse Dictionary*. The reader simply looks up the meaning—"cave explorer"—and discovers the unremembered word: *spelunker*.

But in many other dictionaries the odd word or fact is the point: *A Dictionary of Clichés*. *A Dictionary of Nicknames*. *The Code Names Dictionary*. *A Dictionary of Words About Alcohol*. *A Dictionary of Misprints*. *A Dictionary of Polish Terms Defining the Goldsmith's Works*. These books often, though unintentionally, raise the question Why in the world would anyone take the trouble to produce this?

Some of those who did take the trouble are naifs and dilettantes and wise-acs; some of them are quirky and crazed and zealous. Others, however, are earnest and intelligent, and credibly defend the purpose and value of their books.

CLASSIC in the field is Mrs. Byrne's *Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words*. The daughter of the violinist Jascha Heifetz, Josefa Heifetz Byrne has sifted through many dictionaries in order to find 6,000 bizarre terms. Her readers can quickly discover *lalochezia* (talking dirty to relieve tension) and *eroteme* (the question mark). Mrs. Byrne's in hand, a person can indict a writer for *mytacism* (excessive or incorrect use of the letter M), snicker at his neighbor's *lythcoop* (auction of household goods), and commiserate over his frustrated friend's *supinivalent* spouse (able to make love only while lying down). Or he can praise the present exercise as *adoxography* (good writing on a trivial subject).

Dabblers in odd dictionaries can play word games, too, using such works as James B. Hobbs's *Homophones and Homographs: An American Dictionary*. The former are words that sound the same but are spelled differently. Double homophones are common (*dents, dense*), but how many quintuples (*air, heir, ere, err, eyre*) come to mind? Homographs are spelled the same but differ in pronunciation and meaning—*does* (the verb) and *does* (female deer).

Weird words, word games—it's play, of course, but not merely. Verbal odd-



ments enrich life. A comb's teeth are *or-lings*. A paper clip has seven named parts. Flip through Dorothy Rose Blumberg's *Whose What? Aaron's Beard to Zorn's Lemma*, a dictionary of possessive phrases. In its pages is *Ulloa's Ring*, which is a rainbow formed in fog. Named for an eighteenth-century Spanish scientist, the ring differs markedly from an ordinary rainbow, appearing blue on the inner rim, red on the outer, and colorless in between. (The very small size of fog droplets accounts for the difference.)

New words also sharpen thoughts. A *blabblurt* is a remark overheard by someone the speaker ardently wishes hadn't overheard. Unusual words can highlight the mysteries of language. Consider this entry from *Mrs. Byrne's*: "*bizmer*—(bīz'mūr) *n.* 1. shame, disgrace, scorn. 2. a disgraceful person. 3. a steelyard. 4. the fifteen-spined stickleback." Fascinating!

The authorial pastime moves easily from fact to fiction. In *An Exaltation of Larks*, for instance, the wordsmith James Lipton gathered collective nouns, many of them real (a "parliament of owls," a "clowder of cats") but some contrived (a "slouch of models," a "pound of pianists"). Nor are the games confined to words; one can play with facts. Adrian Room, the compiler of *Room's Dictionary of Confusibles* (*maudlin* or *mawkish*? *coddle* or *cosset*?), also produced the *Dictionary of Trade Name Origins* (Why are there no grapes or nuts in Grape Nuts?).

But, real or invented, these words or facts confer the gift of novelty without complication, of variety without confusion. Each strange term—*trantles* (things of little value), *philtrum* (the vertical furrow between nose and upper lip)—is small and simple and still, a butterfly fixed and formaldehyded. Each is defined in no more than a sentence fragment. *Dilling*: a child of old parents. No more than that. Different, but not deep.

THE ODDBALL dictionary can be a vehicle for armchair adventure through time and space. What standard history would reveal that the seventeenth century had twenty-one synonyms for *pun* (*carriwitchet*, *liripoop*), as one dictionary of lost words tells us? Savor, too, Jack Smiley's *Hash House Lingo*, and listen to coffee-shop talk in the war years (*apron up*: "pregnant";

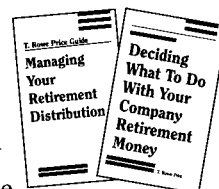
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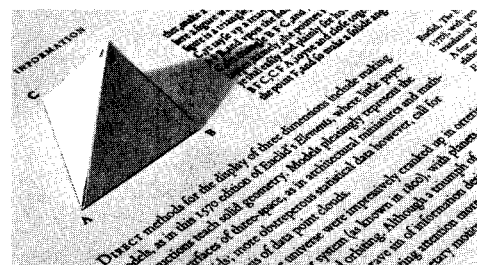
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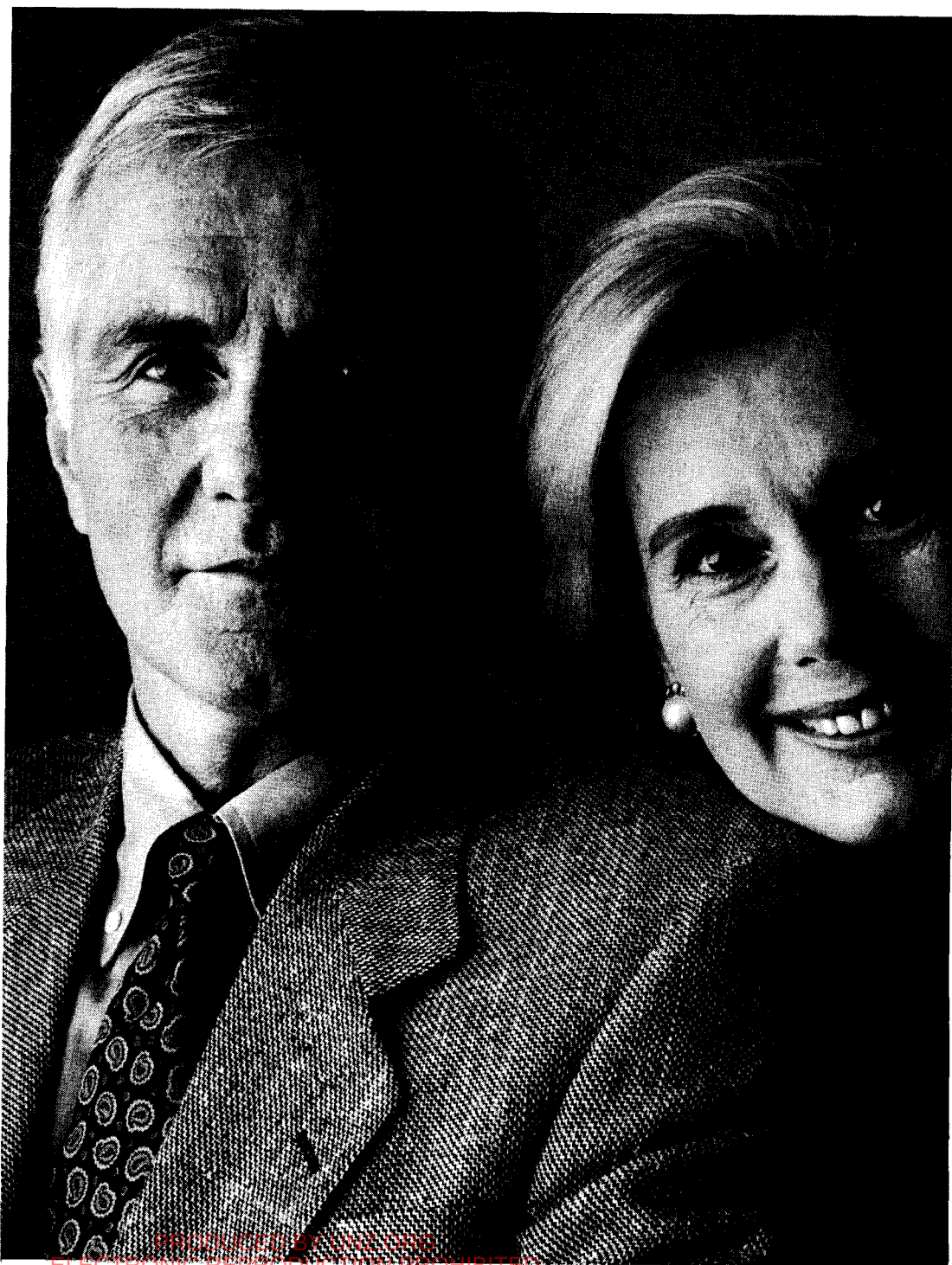
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**What every man
should know
about his prostate.**



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What and where the prostate is

Only men have a prostate. It's a walnut-sized gland located at the base of the bladder. It surrounds a part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder through the penis.

The prostate supplies the milky fluid that helps transport sperm through the penis during ejaculation. The prostatic fluid also aids conception by providing support and nour-

ishment for the sperm and helping to make the vaginal canal less acidic.

What an enlarged prostate is

In most men, after age 45, the prostate starts to enlarge and may continue to enlarge for the rest of a man's life. This growth may be benign prostate enlargement, a non-cancerous condition. A major cause is the activity of a key hormone.

By itself, benign prostate enlargement isn't a problem. But as the prostate continues to grow, it can squeeze the urethra (like pinching a straw) and interfere with the normal flow of urine, causing uncomfortable and embarrassing symptoms.

Benign prostate enlargement is a common medical finding in older men. However, not every man develops the condition, and in those who do, it is not always progressive.

The urinary symptoms of an enlarged prostate

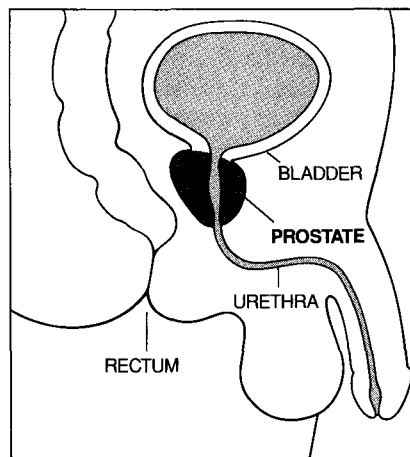
Among the symptoms commonly associated with an enlarged prostate are more frequent urination, especially during the night, or the sudden, almost uncontrollable urge to urinate. The added pressure on the urethra can also cause a weak, interrupted urine stream, a sense of the bladder not emptying completely, leakage, and difficulty in starting urination. It can even result in total blockage, a serious condition.

Why you should consult the doctor

Symptomatic benign prostate enlargement can be helped. Recent advances in treatment have been made, and today your doctor has several options. So now, more than ever, is an excellent time to consult your

doctor. You and your doctor should discuss which treatment option would be best for you.

If you experience any symptoms, see your doctor and speak frankly about the problem. A simple rectal examination enables the doctor to feel, with a gloved finger, the size and condition of the prostate. This exam, and other tests the doctor may recommend, will also help to rule out the possibility of prostate cancer. Benign prostate enlargement is not cancer and does not turn into cancer.



The prostate is located at the base of the bladder. It surrounds a part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder through the penis. As the prostate enlarges, it can squeeze the urethra and cause urinary problems.

These days, prostate problems don't have to interfere with living your life to the fullest. That's what every man should know.

Talk to your doctor, soon. And, for a free booklet with more information, call 1-800-635-4452.





blackout: “coffee, no milk”). And admire the artless grace in Harvey Sheppard’s *Dictionary of Railway Slang*, a British volume. Along with railroad jargon (*sparkler*: “electric train”; *snip*: “ticket collector”), the book, like the best of its kind, gives us words of wide application (a *spudler* is “one who causes trouble indirectly”; the brilliant *steam pig* is “anybody or anything not specifically definable”).

But through all the fun something gnaws at the compilers of such books. And so they strive mightily to drape their books in the garb of the dictionary realm: high purpose and practical value. “For uncounted centuries” death-bed utterances have been “the daily stuff of legends,” Le Comte writes in *Last Words*. To hear these phrases, he avers, is to “visit at the cave of possible wisdom. . . .”

Indeed! At times the justifications are heroic. Consider the *Reverse Acronyms, Initialisms & Abbreviations Dictionary*, edited by Jennifer Mossman. Most dictionaries of abbreviations take an abbreviation and then define it: *NF*—“Not Fordable.” The effort by Mossman—and it is not alone—works in reverse. In such books a reader might look up “United States of America” and find *USA*. In the broad scheme of things, how useful can such works be? Mossman responds with vigor.

“If all abbreviated terms were as logically formed as Royal Artillery—*RA*,” Mossman concedes, there would be “little need” for her book. However, “the countless exceptions to this generalized formation . . . make a guide essential,” she then declares. “Receipt Acknowledged, for instance, is not shortened to *RA*, but rather to *REACK*; Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament is abbreviated as *MHS*, not *SMHS*.” And, she observes darkly, should a student abbreviate his Bachelor of Interior Architecture degree as *BIA*, he will unwittingly have conferred upon himself a vastly different credential, the Bachelor of Industrial Arts.

A lengthy argument such as this is not always needed. For certain constituencies, some peculiar dictionaries are invaluable. Graduate students desperate for dissertation topics can consult André Joseph Launay’s *Dictionary of Contemporaries*, for instance. This work shows “who were the contemporaries of any writer, artist, composer, philosopher or other influentially cre-

ative person of note, born at any time before 1900 A.D.” Armed with the knowledge that James Whitcomb Riley was roughly contemporary with Arthur Rimbaud—ditto for Luigi Pirandello and Edwin Arlington Robinson—the student can proceed to search for literary influences.

NOT EVERY eccentric dictionary, of course, achieves its aspirations toward practicality. But never mind, for practical utility is hardly the sum of human requirements. People not only want *dilling* and *lyth-coop*, they need them in order to live well. They also require the subtle distinction (*whirl* or *whorl*?), the historical tidbit (Liverpool was founded in 1199), the curious fact (twelve Matildas have been granted sainthood).

Thus we may not know the relative roles of nature and nurture in personality formation, or the best balance for the commonweal between individual responsibility and paternalism. We have no clear answer to the Homeric Question, and our researchers have discovered no cure for AIDS. But we do have the *Dictionary of Foreign Words in Ukrainian*. This book consists of those foreign-to-Ukrainian words that Ukrainians use.

In *A Dictionary of Battles*, David Eggenberger imposes order on the central human act of disorder: war. The book “covers more than 1,560 separate and distinct military engagements, from the first battle of Megiddo in 1479 B.C. to the fighting in Vietnam during the 1960’s,” Eggenberger writes in his preface. “A battle may be further defined,” he says in another typical passage, “by distinguishing it from a skirmish, a raid, or a siege.” The book, the reader soon learns, is far from the battlefield. Ordeal has become order; confusion has become criteria; soldiers, bleeding and dazed and scurrying pell-mell, have coalesced into two columns of type, justified.

Are some wars just? Will future editions of *A Dictionary of Battles* speak of 2,000 or 3,000 or 4,000 encounters? The *Dictionary*, of course, cannot tell us. But it does what it can. For example, we learn that Jerusalem, where nine engagements have been fought, is the most embattled place in the world. How many more fights will take place in that beleaguered city? Again *Battles* cannot tell us, but this it can say, and

say with conviction: Rome, having survived seven engagements, is not far behind.

Everyman’s Dictionary of Dates tells us that Shah Jehan built the Taj Mahal in memory of his favorite wife, who died in 1629. It also tells us that this enduring monument to love took twenty-two years to construct (1630–1652). How much did they love, these fabled lovers? How can great love and irreversible death coexist? The book, of course, does not know, but within the province of dates—In what year (and month!) was the Little Entente formed? When was the Koh-i-Noor Diamond given to Queen Victoria?—*Dates* does answer, and does so with confident, comforting mastery.

SOME OF these plucky lexicographers take on large subjects. The *Dictionary of Love* is one example; another, especially endearing, is *The International Dictionary of Thoughts*, which follows this outline: I. General. II. Bible. III. Shakespeare.

But many offbeat dictionaries address matters far more modest. A sampler: *The Dictionary of Literary Pseudonyms*. *A Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*. *The Dictionary of Disasters at Sea During the Age of Steam*. *The Dictionary of Colonial American Printers’ Ornaments and Illustrations*. *The Dictionary of Hervey’s of All Classes, Callings, Counties, and Spellings, from 1040 to 1500*, by Sydenham Henry Augustus Hervey.

Whether their topic is large or little, many of these lexicographers, especially those from a more innocent age, seem full of beans and hope. They are busy can-do beavers, confident that they can dictionary the world. We’ll record all the words, all the facts, they say, and soon the seeming chaos will coalesce into one gorgeous rule, just as gravity’s many manifestations became Newton’s law.

To the listless modern cynic, this naive energy can be either charming or annoying. Sure, one is tempted to say, and as soon as we straighten out this eminent-Welshmen situation, we can address ourselves to Tagalog eponyms, rhyming Mandarin slang, and Esperanto punctuation conventions. Then, by degrees, maybe we’ll get to some of those other pesky little projects—say, the nature of evil, and why man’s reach exceeds his grasp.

—Francis Flaherty



Dr. Karen Strauss, environmental engineer, with son Luke and daughter Jenny

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Biologists have argued for a century that an ever-growing population will bring the apocalypse. Economists argue that man and markets will cope—so far none of the predicted apocalypses have arrived. The near-term questions, though, are political, and they are overlooked in the fierce battles

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

BY CHARLES C. MANN

IN 1980, WHEN I WAS LIVING IN NEW YORK CITY, IT CAME TO MY ATTENTION THAT the federal government was trying to count every inhabitant of the United States. In my building—subject, like many in New York, to incredibly complicated rent-control laws—a surprising number of apartments were occupied by illegal subtenants. Many went to elaborate lengths to conceal the fact of their existence. They put the legal tenant's name on the doorbell. They received their mail at a post-office

box. They had unlisted telephone numbers. The most paranoid refused to reveal their names to strangers. How, I wondered, was the Census Bureau going to count these people?

I decided to find out. I answered an advertisement and attended a course. In a surprisingly short time I became an official enumerator. My job was to visit apartments that had not mailed back their census forms. As identification, I was given a black plastic briefcase with a big red, white, and blue sticker that said U.S. CENSUS. I am a gangling, six-foot-four-inch Caucasian; the government sent me to Chinatown.

Strangely enough, I was a failure. Some people took one look and slammed the door. One elderly woman burst into tears at the sight of me. I was twice offered money to go away. Few residents had time to fill out a long form.

Eventually I met an old census hand. "Why don't you just curbstone it?" he asked. "Curbstoning," I learned, was enumerator jargon for sitting on the curbstone and filling out forms with made-up information. I felt qualms about taking taxpayers' money to cheat. Instead, I asked to be assigned to another area.

Wall Street is not customarily thought of as residential, but people live there anyway. Some live in luxury, some in squalor. None were glad to see me, even though I had given away the damning U.S. CENSUS briefcase to my four-year-old stepson. The turning point came when I approached two small buildings. One was ruined and empty. The other, though scarcely in better condition, was obviously full of people, but not one of them would answer the bell. In a fit of zealotry I climbed through the ruin next door. Coated with grime and grit, I emerged on



the roof and leaped onto the roof of my target. A man was living on it, in a big, dilapidated shack.

He flung open his door. Inside I dimly perceived several apparently naked people lying on gurneys. "Go away!" the man screamed. He was wearing a white coat. "I'm giving my wife a cancer treatment!"

My enthusiasm waned. I jumped back to the other roof. On the street I sat on the curbstone and filled out a dozen forms. When I was through, fifty men, women, and children had been added to the populace of New York City.

PROFESSIONAL DEMOGRAPHERS ARE NOT AMUSED BY this sort of story. This is not because they are stuffy but because they've heard it all before. Finding out how many people live in any particular place is strikingly difficult, no matter what the place is. In the countryside people are scattered through miles of real estate; in the city they occupy nooks and crannies often missed by official scrutiny. No accurate census has ever been taken in some parts of Africa, but even in the United States, the director of the Census Bureau has said, the last official count, in 1990, missed more than five million people—enough to fill Chicago twice over. If my experience means anything, that number is low.

It's too bad, because How many are we? is an interesting question. Indeed, to many people it is an alarming question. For them, thinking about population means thinking about *over*population—which is to say, thinking about poverty, hunger, despair, and social unrest. For me, the subject evokes the vague unease I felt toting around *The Population Bomb*, which I read in school. ("It's Still Not Too Late to Make the Choice," the cover proclaimed. "Population Control or Race to Oblivion.") In other people it evokes the desire to put fences on our borders and stop the most wretched from breeding.

The Population Bomb appeared twenty-five years ago, in 1968. Written by the biologist Paul Ehrlich, of Stanford University, it was a gloomy book for a gloomy time. India was still undergoing a dreadful famine, Latin American exports of grain and meat had dropped to pre-war levels, and global food production was lagging behind births. More than half the world's people were malnourished. Nobel laureates were telling Congress that unless population growth stopped, a new Dark Age would cloud the world and "men will have to kill and eat one another." A well-regarded book, *Famine 1975!*, predicted that hunger would begin to wipe out the Third World that year. (Fortunately, the book pointed out, there was a bright side: the United States could increase its influence by playing triage among the victims.) In 1972 a group of researchers at MIT would issue *The Limits to Growth*, which used advanced computer models to project that the world would run out of gold in 1981, oil in 1992, and arable land in 2000. Civilization itself would collapse by 2070.

The projections failed to materialize. Birth rates dropped; food production soared; the real price of oil

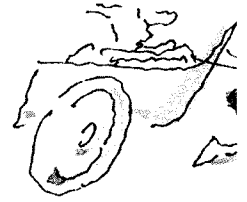
sank to a record low. Demographers were not surprised. Few had given much credence to the projections in the first place. Nonetheless, a certain disarray appeared in the work of what Ansley Coale, of Princeton's Office of Population Research, calls the "scribbling classes." Doubts emerged about the wisdom and effectiveness of the billion-dollar population-control schemes established by the

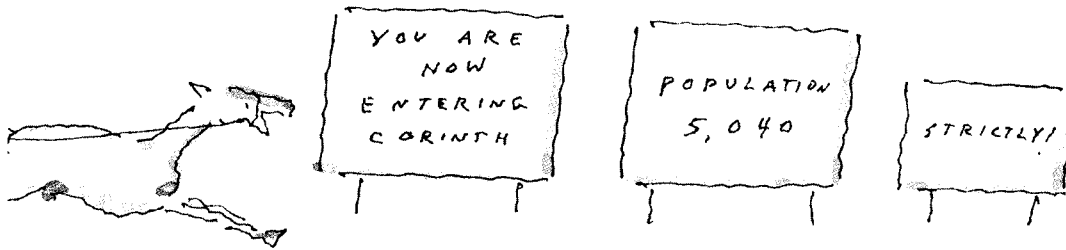
United Nations and others in the 1960s. Right-wingers attacked them as bureaucratic intrusions into private life. Critics on the left observed that once again rich whites were trying to order around poor people of color. Less ideological commentators pointed out that the intellectual justification for spending billions on international family-planning programs was shaky—it tacitly depended on the notion that couples in the Third World are somehow too stupid to know that having lots of babies is bad. Ehrlich dismissed the carpers as "imbeciles."

Population has become the subject of a furious intellectual battle, complete with mutually contradictory charts, graphs, and statistics. The cloud of facts and factoids often seems impenetrable, but after peering through it for a time I came to suspect that the fighters had become distracted. Locked in conflict, they had barely begun to address the real nature of the challenge posed by population growth. *Homo sapiens* will keep growing in number, as everyone agrees, and that growth may have disagreeable consequences. But those consequences seem less likely to stem from the environmental collapse the apocalyptists predict than from the human race's perennial inability to run its political affairs wisely. The distinction is important, and dismaying.

Cassandras and Pollyannas

HOW MANY PEOPLE IS TOO MANY? OVER TIME, the debate has spread between two poles. On one side, according to Garrett Hardin, an ecologist at the University of California at Santa Barbara, are the Cassandras, who believe that continued population growth at the current rate will inevitably lead to catastrophe. On the other are the Pollyannas, who believe that humanity faces problems but has a good shot at coming out okay in the end. Cassandras, who tend to be biologists, look at each new birth as the arrival on the planet of another hungry mouth. Pollyannas, who tend to be economists, point out that along with each new mouth comes a pair of hands. Biologist or economist—is either one right? It is hard to think of a question more fundamental to our crowded world.





Cassandras and Pollyannas have spoken up throughout history. Philosophers in ancient China fretted about the need to shift the masses to underpopulated areas; meanwhile, in the Mideast, the Bible urged humanity to be fruitful and multiply. Plato said that cities with more than 5,040 landholders were too large; Martin Luther believed that it was impossible to breed too much, because God would always provide. And so on.

Early economists tended to be Pollyannas. People, they thought, are a resource—"the chiefest, most fundamental, and precious commodity" on earth, as William Petyt put it in 1680. Without a healthy population base, societies cannot afford to have their members specialize. In small villages almost everyone is involved with producing food; only as numbers grow can communities afford luxuries like surgeons, scientists, and stand-up comedians. The same increase lowers the cost of labor, and hence the cost of production—a notion that led at least one Enlightenment-era writer, J. F. Melon, to endorse slavery as an excellent source of a cheap work force.

As proof of their theory, seventeenth-century Pollyannas pointed to the Netherlands, which was strong, prosperous, and thickly settled, and claimed that only such a populous place could be so rich. In contrast, the poor, sparsely inhabited British colonies in the New World were begging immigrants to come and swell the work force. One of the chief duties of a ruler, these savants thought, was to ensure population growth. A high birth rate, the scholar Bernard Mandeville wrote in 1732, is "the never-failing Nursery of Fleets and Armies."

Mandeville wrote when the Industrial Revolution was beginning to foster widespread urban unemployment and European cities swarmed with beggars. Hit by one bad harvest after another, Britain tottered through a series of economic crises, which led to food shortages and poverty on a frightful scale. By 1803 local parishes were handing out relief to about one out of every seven people in England and Wales. In such a climate it is unsurprising that the most famous Cassandra of them all should appear: the Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus.

"Right from the publication of the *Essay on Population* to this day," the great economic historian Joseph Schumpeter wrote in 1954, "Malthus has had the good fortune

—for this *is* good fortune—to be the subject of equally unreasonable, contradictory appraisals." John Maynard Keynes regarded Malthus as the "beginning of systematic economic thinking." Percy Bysshe Shelley, on the other hand, derided him as "a eunuch and a tyrant." John Stuart Mill viewed Malthus as a great thinker. To Karl Marx he was a "plagiarist" and a "shameless sycophant of the ruling classes." "He was a benefactor of humanity," Schumpeter wrote. "He was a fiend. He was a profound thinker. He was a dunce."

The subject of the controversy was a shy, kindly fellow with a slight harelip. He was also the first person to hold a university position in economics—that is, the first professional economist—in Britain, and probably the world. Married late, he had few children, and he was never overburdened with money. He was impelled to write his treatise on population by a disagreement with his father, a well-heeled eccentric in the English style. The argument was over whether the human race could transform the world into a paradise. Malthus thought not, and said so at length—55,000 words, published as an unsigned broadside in 1798. Several longer, signed versions followed, as Malthus became more confident.

"The power of population," Malthus proclaimed, "is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man." In modern textbooks this notion is often explained with a graph. One line on the graph represents the land's capacity to produce food; it slowly rises from left to right as people clear more land and learn to farm more efficiently. Another line starts out low, quickly climbs to meet the first, and then soars above it; that line represents human population. Eventually the gap between the two lines cannot be bridged and the Horsemen of the Apocalypse pay a call. Others had anticipated this idea. Giovanni Botero, an Italian scholar, described the basic relationship of population and resources in 1589, two centuries before Malthus. But few read Malthus's predecessors, and nobody today seems inclined to replace the term "Malthusian" with "Boterian."

The *Essay* was a jolt. Simple and remorselessly logical,

blessed with a perverse emotional appeal, it seemed to overturn centuries of Pollyanna-dom at a stroke. Forget Utopia, Malthus said. Humanity is doomed to exist, now and forever, at the edge of starvation. Forget charity, too: helping the poor only leads to more babies, which in turn produces increased hardship down the road. Little wonder that the essayist Thomas Carlyle found this theory so gloomy that he coined the phrase “dismal science” to describe it. Others were more vituperative, especially those who thought that the *Essay* implied that God would not provide for His children. “Is there no law in this kingdom for punishing a man for publishing a libel against the Almighty himself?” demanded one anonymous feuilleton.

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In all the tumult hardly anyone took the trouble to note that logical counter-arguments were available.

The most important derived from the work of Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, a French *philosophe* who is best known for his worship of Reason. Four years before Malthus, Condorcet observed that France was finite, the potential supply of French infinite. Unlike Malthus, though, Condorcet believed that technology could solve the problem. When hunger threatens, he wrote, “new instruments, machines, and looms” will continue to appear, and “a very small amount of ground will be able to produce a great quantity of supplies.” Society changes so fast, in other words, that Malthusian scenarios are useless. Given the level of productivity of our distant ancestors, in other words, we

should already have run out of food. But we know more than they, and are more prosperous, despite our greater numbers.

Malthus and Condorcet fixed the two extremes of a quarrel that endures today. The language has changed, to be sure. Modern Cassandras speak of “ecology,” a concept that did not exist in Malthus’s day, and worry about exceeding the world’s “carrying capacity,” the ecological ceiling beyond which the land cannot support life. Having seen the abrupt collapses that occur when populations of squirrels, gypsy moths, or Lapland reindeer exceed local carrying capacities, they foresee the same fate awaiting another species: *Homo sapiens*. Pollyannas note that no such

collapse has occurred in recorded history. Evoking the “demographic transition”—the observed propensity for families in prosperous societies to have fewer children—they say that continued economic growth can both feed the world’s billions and enrich the world enough to end the population boom. No! the Cassandras cry. Growth is the *problem*. We’re growing by 100 million people every year! We can’t keep doing that forever!

True, Pollyannas concede. If present-day trends continue for centuries, the earth will turn into a massive ball of human flesh. A few millennia more, Ansley Coale, of Princeton, calculates, and that ball of flesh will be expanding outward at the speed of light. But he sees little point in the exercise of projecting lines on a graph out to their absurdly horrible conclusion. “If you had asked someone in 1890 about today’s population,” Coale explains, “he’d say, ‘There’s no way the United States can support two hundred and fifty million people. Where are they going to pasture all their horses?’”

Just as the doomsayers feared, the world’s population has risen by more than half since Paul Ehrlich wrote *The Population Bomb*. Twenty-five years ago 3.4 billion people lived on earth. Now the United Nations estimates that 5.3 billion do—the biggest, fastest increase in history. But food production increased faster still. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN, not only did farmers keep pace but per capita global food production actually rose more than 10 percent from 1968 to 1990. The number of chronically malnourished people fell by more than 16 percent. (All figures on global agriculture and population in the 1990s, including those in this article, mix empirical data with projections, because not enough time has elapsed to get hard numbers.)

“Much of the world is better fed than it was in 1950,” concedes Lester R. Brown, the president of the Worldwatch Institute, an environmental-research group in Washington, D.C. “But that period of improvement is ending rather abruptly.” Since 1984, he says, world grain production per capita has fallen one percent a year. In 1990, eighty-six nations grew less food per head than they had a decade before. Improvements are unlikely, in Brown’s view. Our past success has brought us alarmingly close to the ecological ceiling. “There’s a growing sense in the scientific community that it will be difficult to restore the rapid rise in agricultural yields we saw between 1950 and 1984,” he says. “In agriculturally advanced nations there just isn’t much more that farmers can do.” Meanwhile, the number of mouths keeps up its frantic rate of increase. “My sense,” Brown says, “is that we’re going to be in trouble on the food front before this decade is out.”

Social scientists disagree. An FAO study published in 1982 concluded that by using modern agricultural methods the Third World could support more than 30 billion people. Other technophiles see genetic engineering as a route to growth that is almost without end. Biologists

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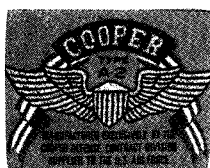
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greet such pronouncements with loud scoffs. One widely touted analysis by Ehrlich and others maintains that humanity already uses, destroys, or "co-opts" almost 40 percent of the potential output from terrestrial photosynthesis. Doubling the world's population will reduce us to fighting with insects over the last scraps of grass.

Neither side seems willing to listen to the other; indeed, the two are barely on speaking terms. The economist Julian Simon, of the University of Maryland, asserts that there is no evidence that the increase in land use associated with rising population has led to any increase in extinction rates—despite hundreds of biological reports to the contrary. The biologist Edward O. Wilson, of Harvard University, argues that contemporary economics is "bankrupt" and does not accommodate environmental calculations—despite the existence of a literature on the subject dating back to the First World War. A National Academy of Sciences panel dominated by economists argues in 1986 that the problems of population growth have been exaggerated. Six years later the academy issues a statement, dominated by biologists, claiming that continued population growth will lead to a global environmental catastrophe that "science and technology may not be able to prevent." Told in an exchange of academic gossip that an eminent ecologist has had himself sterilized, an equally eminent demographer says, "That's the best news I've heard all week!" Asking himself what "deep insights" professional demographers have contributed, Garrett Hardin answers, "None."

The difference in the forecasts—prosperity or penury, boundless increase or zero-sum game, a triumphant world with 30 billion or a despairing one with 10—is so extreme that one is tempted to dismiss the whole contretemps as foolish. If the experts can't even discuss the matter civilly, why should the average citizen try to figure it out? Ignoring the fracas might be the right thing to do if it weren't about the future of the human race.

Two Nations

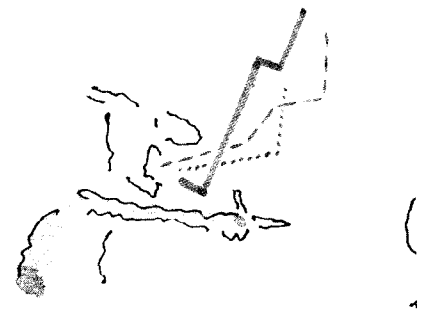
POPULATION QUESTIONS ARE FUZZY. EVEN AN APPARENTLY simple term like "overpopulation" is hard to define exactly. Part of the reason is that evaluating the consequences of rapid population growth falls in the odd academic space where ecology, economics, anthropology, and demography overlap. Another part of the reason is that attempts to isolate specific social or environmental consequences of rapid population growth tend to sink into ideological quicksand.

By way of example, consider two nations. One is about the size of Maryland and has a population of 7.2 million; the other is as big as Montana but has a population of 123.5 million. The first has a population density of 703 people per square mile, a lot by most standards; the second has a density of 860 per square mile, among the highest on the planet. Country No. 1 has tracts of untouched

forest and reserves of gold, tin, tungsten, and natural gas. Country No. 2 has few natural resources and little arable land. Life there is so crowded that the subways hire special guards to mash people onto the trains. Is it, therefore, overpopulated?

Most economists would say no. Country No. 2 is Japan. Paul Demeny, a demographer at the Population Council, in New York City, notes that Japan is where the Malthusian nightmare has come true. Population has long since overtaken agricultural capacity. "Japan would be in great trouble if it had to feed itself," Demeny says. "They can't eat VCRs. But they don't worry, because they can exchange them for food." Demeny is less sanguine about Country No. 1—Rwanda, the place with the highest fertility rate in the world. There, too, the production of food lags behind the production of people. But Rwanda, alas, has little to trade. "If something goes wrong," Demeny says, "they will have to beg."

Some economists might therefore attach to this crowded land the label "overpopulated." Others, though, might say that Rwanda has not yet reached the kind of critical



mass necessary to develop its rich natural endowment. Fewer than 200,000 souls inhabit Kigali, its capital and biggest city, hardly enough to be the hub of a modern nation. In this case, a cure for having too many children to feed might be to have more children—the approach embraced by the Rwandan government until 1983.

Rwanda's leaders may well have been bowing to the popular will. By and large, people in the developing world have big families because they want them. "The notion that people desperately want to have fewer children but can't quite figure out how to do it is a bit simple," Demeny says. "If you picture an Indian who sees his children as capital because at the age of nine they can be sent to work in a carpet factory, his interest in family planning will not be keen." If the hypothetical impoverished Indian father does not today desperately need the money that his children can earn, he will need it in his dotage. Offspring are the Social Security of traditional cultures everywhere, a form of savings that few can afford to forgo. In such cases the costs of big families (mass illiteracy, crowded hiring halls, overused public services) are spread across society, whereas the benefits (income, old-

age insurance) are felt at home. Economists call such phenomena "market failure." The outcome, entirely predictable, is a rapidly growing population.

Equally predictable is the proposed solution: bringing home the cost to those who experience the benefits. Enforcing child-labor and truancy laws, for example, drives up the price of raising children, and may improve their lives as well. Reducing price controls on grain raises farmers' incomes, allowing them to hire adults rather than put their children to work. Increasing opportunities for women lets them choose between earning income and having children. In the short term such modifications can hurt. In the long term, Demeny believes, they are "a piece of social engineering that any modern society should aspire to." Rwanda, like many poor countries, now has a population-control program. But pills and propaganda will be ineffective if having many children continues to be the rational choice of parents.

To ecologists, this seems like madness. Rational, indeed! More people in Rwanda would mean ransacking its remaining tropical forest—an abhorrent thought. The



real problem is that Rwandans receive an insufficient share of the world's feast. The West should help them rise as they are, by forgiving their debts, investing in their industries, providing technology, increasing foreign aid—and insisting that they cut birth rates. As for the claim that Japan is not overpopulated, the Japanese are shipping out their polluting industries to neighboring countries—the same countries, environmentalists charge, that they are denuding with rapacious logging. "If all nations held the same number of people per square kilometer," Edward O. Wilson has written about Japan, "they would converge in quality of life to Bangladesh. . . ." To argue that Tokyo is a model of populousness with prosperity is, Wilson thinks, "sophistic."

Wait, one hears the economists cry, that's not predation, that's trade! Insisting on total self-sufficiency veers toward autarky. Japan logs other people's forests because its own abundant forests are too mountainous to sustain a full program of—and *wait a minute*, haven't we been here before? The competing statistics, the endless back-and-forth argument? Isn't there some better way to think about this?

Good News, Bad News

IN 1968, WHEN *THE POPULATION BOMB* WAS FIRST PUBLISHED, the United Nations Population Division surveyed the world's demographic prospects. Its researchers projected future trends in the world's total fertility rate, a figure so common in demographic circles that it is often referred to, without definition, as the TFR. The TFR is the answer to the question "If women keep having babies at the present rate, how many will each have, on average, in her lifetime?" If a nation's women have two children apiece, exactly replacing themselves and the fathers of their children, the TFR will be 2.0 and the population will eventually stop growing. (Actually, replacement level is around 2.1, because some children die.) In the United States the present TFR is about 2.0, which means that, not counting immigration, the number of Americans will ultimately hit a plateau. (Immigration, of course, may alter this picture.) But the researchers in the division were not principally concerned with the United States. They were looking at poorer countries, and they didn't like what they saw.

As is customary, the division published three sets of population projections: high, medium, and low, reflecting different assumptions behind them. The medium projection, usually what the demographer regards as the most likely alternative, was that the TFR for developing nations would fall 15 percent from 1965–1970 to 1980–1985. At the time, Ronald Freedman recalls, this view was regarded as optimistic. "There was a lot of skepticism that anything could happen," he says. He was working on family-planning programs in Asia, and he received letters from colleagues telling him how hopeless the whole endeavor was.

Now a professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Michigan, Freedman is on the scientific advisory committee of Demographic and Health Surveys, a private organization in Columbia, Maryland, which is funded by the U.S. government to assess births and deaths in Third World nations. Its data, painstakingly gathered from surveys, are among the best available. From 1965–1970 to 1980–1985 fertility in poor countries dropped 30 percent, from a TFR of 6.0 to one of 4.2. In that period, Freedman and his colleague Ann K. Blanc have pointed out, the poor countries of the world moved almost halfway to a TFR of 2.1: replacement level. (By 1995, Blanc says, they might be two thirds of the way there.) If the decrease continues, it will surely be the most astonishing demographic shift in history. (The second most astonishing will be the rise that preceded it.) The world went halfway to replacement level in the twenty years from 1965 to 1985; arithmetic suggests that if this trend continues we will arrive at replacement level in the subsequent twenty years—that is, by 2005.

That's the good news. The bad news is that since the late 1960s, 1.9 billion more people have arrived on the

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planet than have left. Even if future rates of fertility are the lowest in history, as is likely, the children of today's children, and their children's children, will keep replacing themselves, and the population will increase vastly. Nothing will stop that increase, not even AIDS. Pessimists estimate that by the end of the decade another 100 million people will be infected by HIV. Almost ten times that number will have been born. Barring unprecedented catastrophe, the year 2100 will see 10 to 12 billion people on the planet.

Nobody will have to wait that long to feel the consequences. In a few years today's children will be clamoring to take their place in the adult world. Jobs, homes, cars, a

few occasional treats—these are things they will want. And though economists are surely right when they say the lesson of history is that the great majority of these men and women will make their way, it is hard not to be awed by the magnitude of the task facing the global economy. A billion jobs. A billion homes. A billion cars. Billions and billions of occasional treats.

Trees and Soil

FEW PLACES IN THE United States better illustrate the unforeseen consequences of population growth than the lower valley of the Hudson River, which runs south from Albany to New York City. The river is wide and placid in appearance, and its banks sparkle with towns that were young when the nation was young. To the

west rise the Catskills, blue at sunset and blanketed by trees. Interstate 87 makes a ribbon between the water and the mountains. A while ago I spent some time driving on that road, and down long miles of its length the forest stretched out so far and so dark and so empty that I imagined I was looking at the America of a hundred years ago, before there were millions of people like me around. How wonderful, I thought, that so close to Manhattan is a huge piece of real estate that we never trashed.

I was wrong. If I had traveled through the Hudson Valley at the end of the last century, I would have passed through an utterly different landscape. I would have been surrounded by small hardscrabble farms, fields of wheat

and corn, and pastures ringed by stone walls. It might have looked picturesque—certainly guidebook writers of the day thought so. But I wouldn't have seen many trees, because long before, almost every scrap of land that wasn't vertical had been clear-cut or burned.

The forest was stripped to make way for agriculture and to supply New York's army of charcoal-burners (who needed lumber to make charcoal), tanners (who extracted tannin from bark), and salt-makers (who used wood fuel to boil down seawater). Loggers played a role too: Albany, the northernmost deepwater port on the Hudson, was the biggest timber town in the nation and possibly the world. When the first Europeans came to New York, the region was almost entirely covered by trees; by the end of the nineteenth century less than a quarter of the state was wooded, and most of what was left had been picked through, or was inaccessible, or was being kept by farmers as private fuel reserves. During the epoch that I, swooping along the tarmac in my minivan, was nostalgically picturing as a paradise, newspaper editorials were warning that deforestation would drive the valley toward ecological disaster.

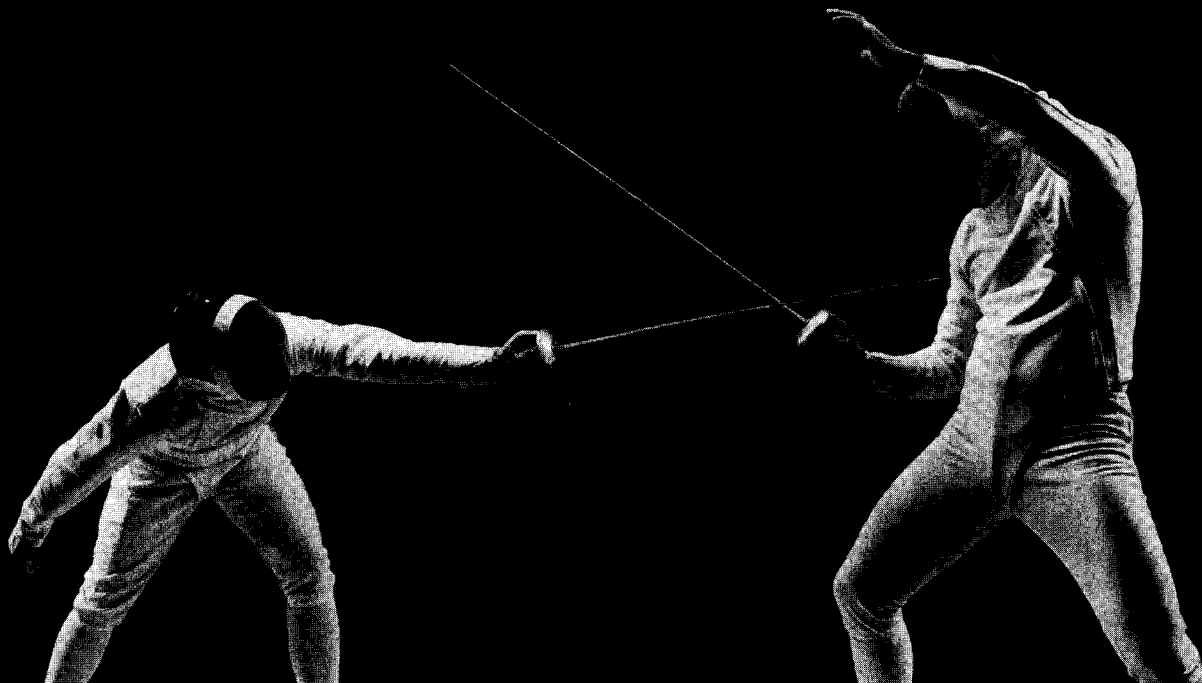
Since then the collapse of small farming has allowed millions of acres to return to nature. When New York State surveyed itself in 1875, the six counties that make up the lower Hudson Valley—Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, and Ulster—contained 573,003 acres of timberland, covering about 21 percent of their total area. In 1980, the date of the most recent survey, trees covered almost 1.8 million acres, more than three times as much. (This is no scrubby growth, mind you. Michael Greason, an associate forester in the state's Department of Environmental Conservation, calls today's Hudson and Catskill forest a "beautiful, diverse ecosystem.")

I was driving around the Hudson Valley partly because I was looking for a house in the country. My method of looking, insofar as one could call it a method, was to hunt in the counties with the lowest populations, figuring that they would be the least spoiled. I was trying to get away from people, and from the unpleasantness I associated with urban life. The more crowded an area, I thought, the more degraded its environment. I wanted natural beauty, and that meant "uninhabited."

Learning some local history gave me pause. Back in 1875 my six counties had a collective population of 345,679. The U.S. Census says the figure for 1990 was 924,075. In other words, the number of people living there almost tripled in the same period that the local ecosystem climbed out of its sickbed and threw away its crutches. This wasn't just some odd thing that happened in New York. As a whole, American forests are bigger and healthier than they were at the turn of the century, when the country's population was below 100 million. Massachusetts and some other states have as many trees as they had in the days of Paul Revere. Nor was this growth restricted to North America: Europe's forest resources in-

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creased by 25 or 30 percent from 1970 to 1990, a time in which its population grew from 462 million to 502 million. Presumably the forest figure would have been yet higher without the continent's damaging acid rain.

People pollute. But more people does not always mean more pollution. Eco-critics can claim, with some justification, that the forests of the Hudson Valley recuperated because farmers abandoned them in order to wipe out the native grasslands of the Great Plains. But they can't explain away all the good news. Salmon are reintroduced to the Thames. White-tailed deer, almost extinct in 1900, plague New England gardens. Air quality in Tokyo improves remarkably. Wild turkeys have a greater range than they did when they were first seen by white settlers. If all this occurred during the population boom, why the belief, now frequently voiced, that overpopulation will lead to an eco-catastrophe?

"You can look at Lake Erie or Detroit and see it's gotten better," says Dennis L. Meadows, the leader of the research group that produced *The Limits to Growth*. "But to leap from that to the conclusion that there has been overall improvement is to look at one person getting rich and say that everybody is better off." Now at the helm of the Institute for Policy and Social Science Research at the University of New Hampshire, Meadows, with two co-authors, has recently published a sequel, *Beyond the Limits*, which is even more pessimistic than the first book. "When a rich country becomes concerned about environmental problems," Meadows says, "then it can typically develop effective responses." Lead additives in gasoline became a subject of American worries. The nation forced petroleum companies to phase out leaded gas, and lead levels diminished. Similar fears have led twenty-three industrialized countries since 1987 to halve the rate of release of the worst ozone-eating compounds. In Meadows's view, rich countries have the wealth to buy their way out of many such difficulties. But other difficulties remain, and their number grows. Soil erodes; draining ruins wetlands; contaminants infiltrate groundwater; toxic wastes keep accumulating. The situation is much worse in poor countries that cannot pay to clean themselves up. Behind all

the concerns is the specter of growing numbers, of insatiable human wants, of continually increasing demand. "We're trying to sustain physical growth on a finite planet," he says. "Growth will stop in our lifetime." Meadows, who is fifty, confidently expects to see the end of population growth in his lifetime—probably through ecological breakdown.

Cassandras like Meadows, Ehrlich, and Lester Brown, of Worldwatch, regard land degradation as one of the worst and most obvious ecological consequences of crowding too many people into too little space. "Land degradation" is a catchall term covering such problems as wind and water erosion, soil pollution by urban wastes or



pesticides, and the buildup of mineral salts caused by improper irrigation. The term may bring to mind newspaper photographs of faraway African husbandmen in terrain nibbled to exhaustion by cattle. But environmentalists say the problem is bigger than that—"virtually a worldwide epidemic," in the words of Anne Ehrlich, a research associate at Stanford University, a veteran Cassandra, and the wife of Paul Ehrlich. The International Soil Reference and Information Centre (ISRIC), in the Netherlands, estimates that since 1945 *Homo sapiens* has degraded 17 percent of the world's land, not counting wastelands like Antarctica and the Gobi Desert. Two thirds of the devastated area will require major restoration.



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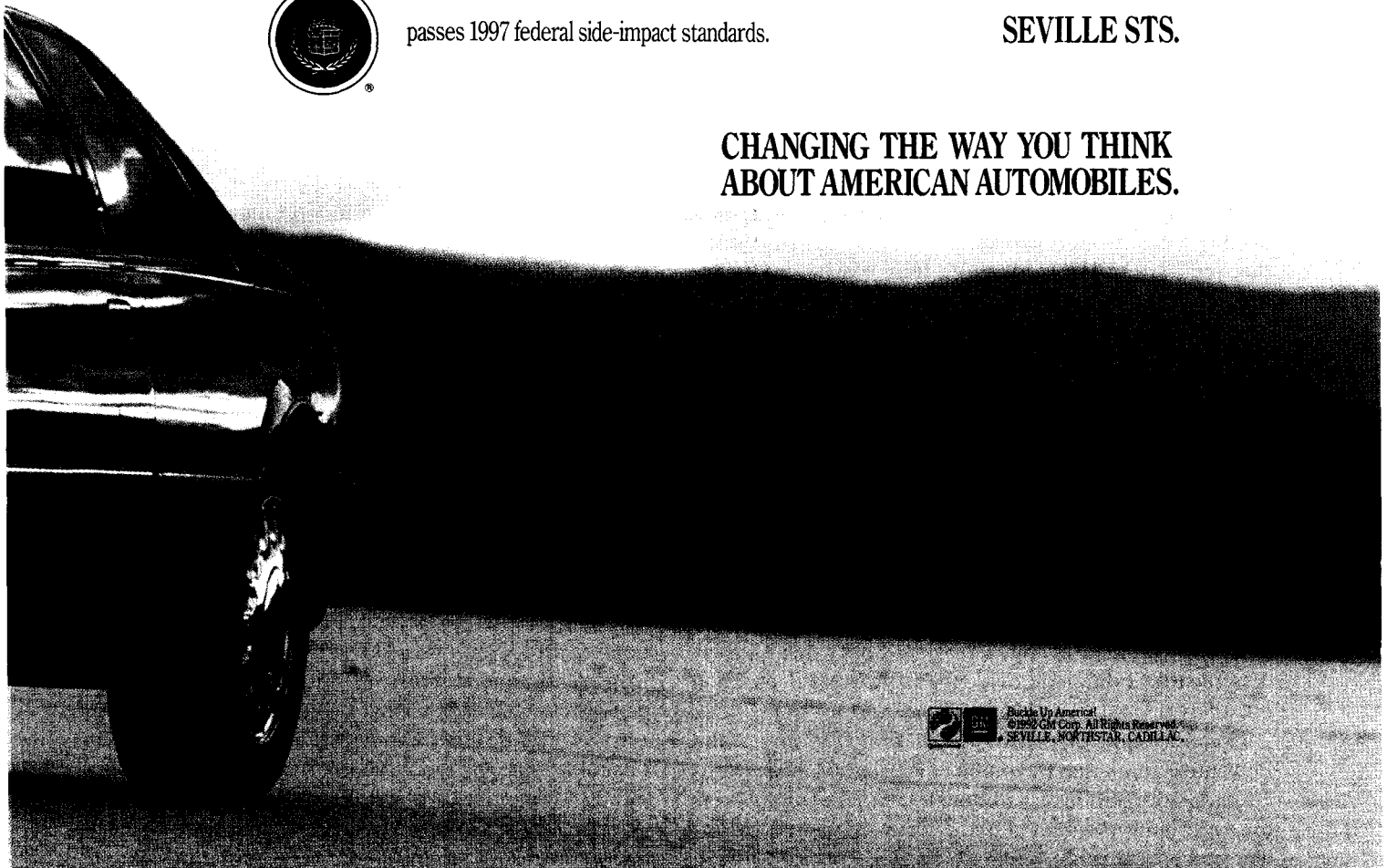
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Every year, Brown warns, erosion steals 24 billion tons of soil from the world's farmers—a figure that the ecology-minded cite as plain evidence that humanity is exceeding the carrying capacity of the planet. The economics-minded see rhetoric and hand-waving. “Those figures Lester Brown is going on are based on really wild assumptions,” says Pierre Crosson, a senior fellow at Resources for the Future, a nonprofit research group in Washington, D.C. “He’s taking poorly understood sedimentation figures from big river deltas and extrapolating them to get a figure for productivity loss for the whole world.” As for the ISRIC study, Crosson points out that it classifies most of Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas as degraded enough to “greatly reduce” productivity. “The problem with this,” he says, “is that in those six states yields have risen steadily over the last forty years.”

The United States has the most carefully measured soil in the world. Every five years the U.S. Department of Agriculture evaluates the nation's land, county by county, in terms of something called “the universal soil loss equation,” which assesses the soil movement in a given area. Because the equation measures movement rather than absolute disappearance, the results are hard to evaluate; they don't distinguish between soil that ends up on the bottom of the ocean and soil that is merely shifted to a neighbor's property, enriching yields there. (Sometimes the neighbors are far away: according to measurements by atmospheric scientists at the University of Virginia, more than 13 million tons of rich African soil are blown every year onto the Amazon forest floor.) In the 1980s three independent studies, one by Crosson, used the data to estimate actual soil loss. All concluded that the peril to U.S. agriculture from erosion is negligible. “The Soil Conservation Service is doing its job,” Crosson says.

It is hard to be as sanguine about the developing world. Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, is often described as a place where overpopulation has led to a terrible destruction of land. The region has high birth rates; per capita food production has consistently fallen in the past ten years. Rainless years in the same period led to overgrazing, deforestation, wide-scale erosion, and the hunger shown in sad televised images. Civil strife and famine have driven at least two million people from their homes. The desert is said to be marching south at a rate of five to six miles a year, a scary prospect that Cassandras regard as dramatic evidence of Africa's population quandary.

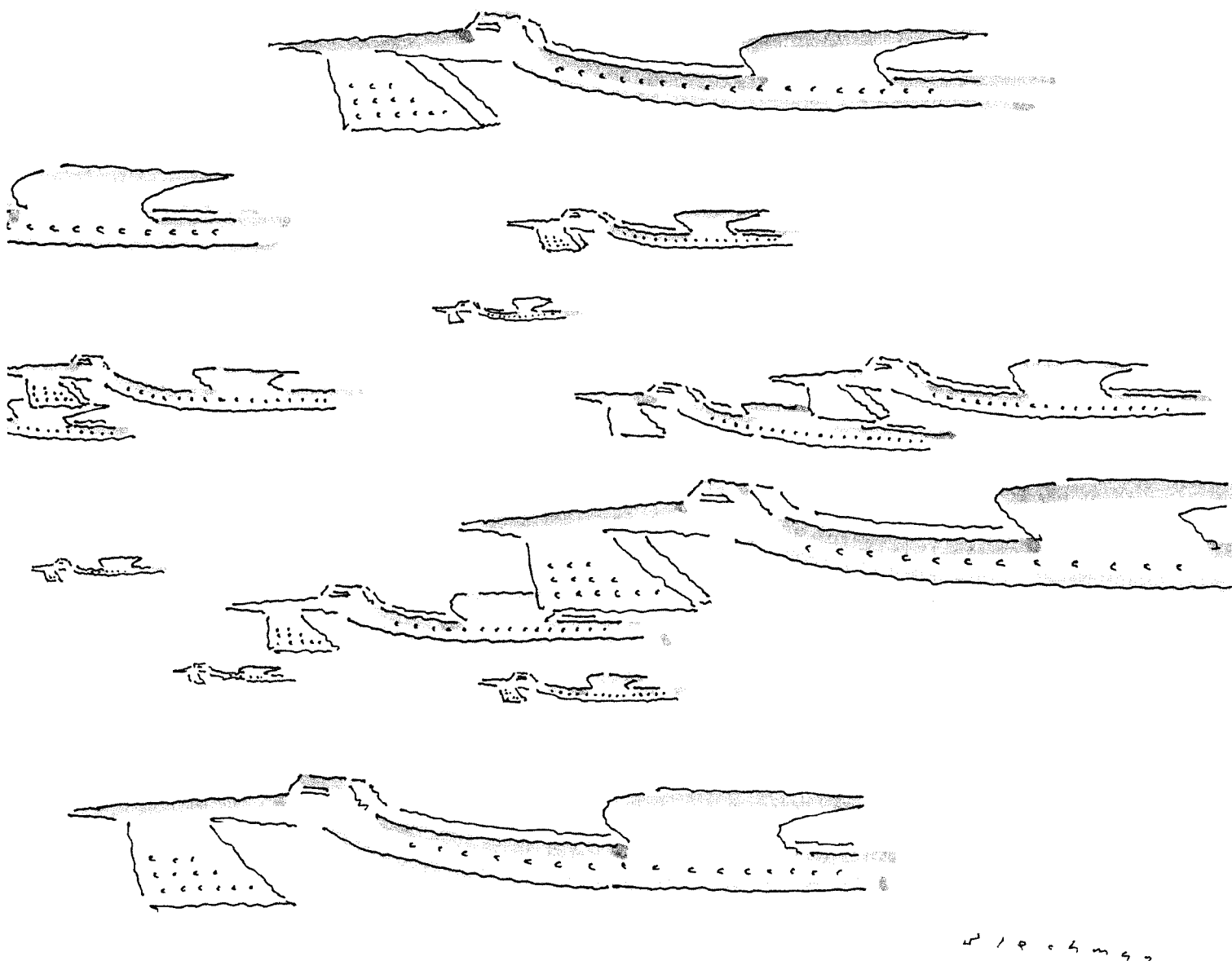
No one doubts that Africa is in a dire position, but the Pollyannas think that the problem is bad luck, bad weather, and bad planning. Traditionally, African villagers often held land in common, with access regulated by unwritten cultural rules. “In those circumstances,” Crosson says, “the people responsible for the management of the land take overuse into account, so they enforce rules of



access that limit the use of the land.” When modern crops and agricultural techniques appear, the system comes apart, because yields shoot high enough to give people a greater incentive to cheat. If they break the rules, they can make a bundle and skip town with the profit; those who play fair are left with the ruins. (Garrett Hardin calls this the “tragedy of the commons.”) Population pressures exacerbate the problem, most economists concede, by shrinking everyone's share of the common land. Add drought or ethnic conflict and the result is disaster. But, they say, African nations without drought or conflict have done increasingly well. Given half a chance, people in Africa, like people anyplace else, seem to make their own way.

The Cassandras base their case “on intuitively powerful hypotheses that slide over the need for empirical verification,” says Michael Mortimore, a senior research associate at Cambridge University, England. “Unfortunately, the only way to test them is to collect a large amount of empirical data.” Mortimore has spent years gathering information on farms in Nigeria and Kenya. His comparison of contemporary and thirteen-year-old dirt samples in Nigeria, one of Africa's most heavily populated nations, shows that increasing population has, if anything, *raised* land productivity. In decades past, farmers could exhaust an area and then move on. Now rising numbers have made land more expensive, and people have greater incentives to take care of what they have. “You're not going to pass on a desert to your children,” Mortimore says. Claiming that Africans are otherwise inclined is, to his mind, “straightforward cultural prejudice.” The agricultural systems that he studies are “economically, socially, and ecologically sustainable.” In Nigeria, he says, the 1992 harvest was the biggest in twenty years.

As for other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, no one denies



the famine there. Yet recent independent studies have found no *long-term* environmental consequences of the recent and devastating drought; the southern border of the desert, one study shows, is in about the same place it was eighty years ago, suggesting that the desert expands and contracts with little regard for its human inhabitants. The drought may have led to temporary overuse of common property, economists concede, but the proper response would be to adjust land-use rules—change the zoning, so to speak—as societies did in other parts of Africa. That response's alleged failure to occur in sub-Saharan Africa says more about the pervasive corruption, inefficiency, and civil turmoil there than about the inherent evils of breeding.

"You always can blame any particular difficulty on something that is not overpopulation," Dennis Meadows

says. "Nobody ever dies of overpopulation. They die of famine, pestilence, and war. There's always some proximate cause." Adjusting land-use rules is desirable in his view, but it does nothing to eliminate the fundamental problem. At bottom, more people means more resource use and more pollution and more loss of biodiversity, all of which must eventually stop. We can't go on forever, because the world is finite. No matter how smart we are, Cassandras say, we can't avoid being part of the web of life, governed by its laws. True enough, the Pollyannas say. But our part in that web is to be different. Other species die when they breed enough to wreck their environments, as they sometimes do. Human beings don't wait to be overwhelmed. When problems arise, we solve them—that's our nature. This argument makes Cassandras smite their collective brow and deride, as Ehrlich did

recently, the “imbeciles running around today saying not to worry, that with the aid of science and technology we can take good care of many billions more.”

Thinking Differently

IN NATHAN KEYFITZ'S VIEW, THE ARGUMENT AMOUNTS to a classic academic standoff. Keyfitz leads a group of demographers at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), a research group in Austria, and is one of the few people I heard praised by both sides in the dispute. Keyfitz recalls attending a meeting at Brandeis University convened with the noble intention of reconciling biologists

and economists. For three days speakers from each side stated their points of view, completely ignoring everything the other side had said. Then, apparently satisfied, everyone went home. “Here,” Keyfitz has written, “is a nightmare for democratic politics: what action to take on vital questions where the experts disagree violently.”

A first step away from the impasse, Keyfitz suggests, might be for each side to accept the validity of the other's arguments, as long as they pertain to that side's discipline. Give the biologists their due, and agree that an increased human presence poses a huge threat to the environment, even if some of the biologists' claims are exaggerated. Then agree with economists that the problems are not due to population growth per se. Instead, population growth changes social and economic systems, which inevitably creates environmental problems: more food must be grown, so that once-adequate agricultural methods now overuse land.

But Keyfitz is hesitant to embrace the next step in the economists' logic. “I think we all know the idea,” he says. “As you catch up with these problems one by one, you turn the power of science on them and produce solutions.” Sometimes the correction is expensive, Cassandras admit, but thoughtful government policies can minimize the pinch. Here we step outside the boundaries of economics into political science, into arguments nobody has promised to accept. The picture, Keyfitz says, has

governments responding wisely—and, as everyone knows, they often don't. Indeed, an outside observer might find it curious that economists—disdainful of government in other matters—exhibit such touching faith in the power of their elected representatives to resolve the troubles exacerbated by rising population.

Even if governments try to respond, they are often unable to anticipate the consequences of their actions. As a means of fostering international communication, Keyfitz says, “the worldwide air-transport network does nothing but good. But it's responsible for the spread of AIDS. Otherwise it would be an unrecognized, unnamed disease in a corner of Africa.” With the instant contact possible today, a local problem became a global catastrophe. “You'd like more chance to breathe,” Keyfitz says. “I'm not saying that any of these problems are inherently unresolvable by themselves, but we wouldn't be running so fast if the world had half its present population.”

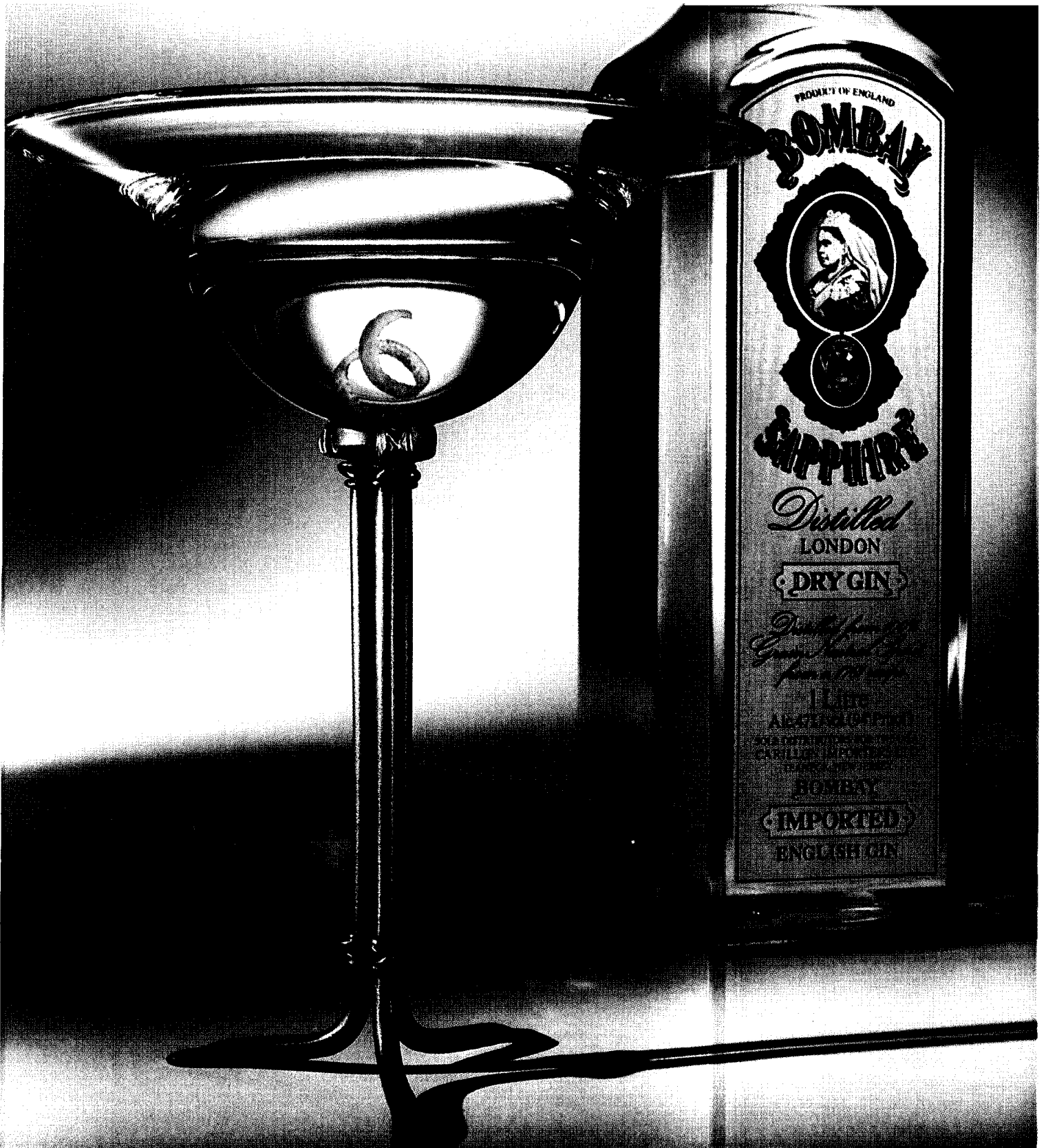
As the human presence increasingly dominates the earth, new difficulties emerge at ever greater speed: The ozone layer. The exhaustion of fisheries. The greenhouse effect. The overuse of aquifers. The need to increase yields of tropical foodstuffs. Each must be evaluated, absorbed, treated, even as the next problem appears. The loss of biodiversity. The collapse of the infrastructure. The destruction of rain forests. And on and on. Maybe people can keep up; certainly Keyfitz's colleagues, the computer modelers at IIASA, think so. But in a world where every citizen is surrounded by examples of governmental incompetence, it is hard to imagine that nations will keep coming through, time after time. There'll be so much *juggling*. So many things will have to be fixed all at once. Societies will find themselves in the position of the antic ninjas in video arcades, hordes of enemies to every side. Whack! Bam! Pow! Eventually, as any adolescent knows, the ninja slips up, and the game is over.

My Madonna Problem

FOR MANY YEARS I HAD AN OFFICE ON THE FOURTEENTH floor of a building in Manhattan, overlooking a busy avenue. During that time I never had air-conditioning, because it does something to the air that makes my nose run. In hot weather I opened the window. A breeze came in, reducing the temperature to a range I found tolerable. The problem was that it was hard to speak on the phone with the window open. People drove around the city with their car stereo systems cranked up to medically unsafe levels. Abrupt blasts of noise filled the room.

A debacle occurred when I interviewed Mario Cuomo, the governor of New York. Arranging the call involved considerable negotiation with his office in Albany. Two minutes into the conversation Madonna arrived. I had to shout over her moans. The governor did not immediately believe my explanation of the sound's origin. The light

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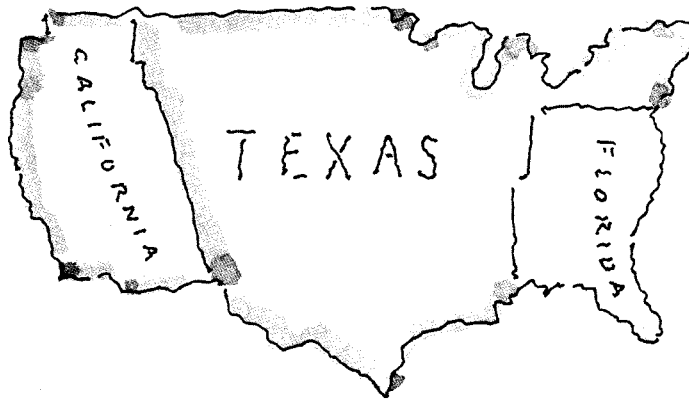


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changed; the noise went away. I asked him a question. Suddenly Madonna showed up again. I realized that she was circling the block, looking for a parking space. I slammed the window shut, raising the room's temperature by ten degrees. The song was still devastatingly loud. The third time the song came round, I draped my jacket over the window. The fourth time, the governor hung up.

Soon after, I began looking for a house in the country.

The noise, and my response to it, illustrate what social scientists might regard as typical population-related feedback. Congestion grows in a city; it becomes impossible to avoid Madonna indoors; people move; the city becomes less congested. Or, perhaps, the city enforces noise ordinances. In either case the problem is resolved after temporary conflict.

"Temporary"—note the hedge word. The window of my old office looked out over the remains of the West Side Highway, part of which was closed as unsafe in the 1970s. I began using the office after a lengthy squabble had broken out over the best way to repair the road. Some wanted to do the job cheaply, shifting the money to mass transit; others said that the city needed the highway to revitalize its waterfront. Politicians, environmentalists, neighborhood groups, and construction unions attacked one another. Reconstructing the West Side Highway became a legal imbroglio of dizzying complexity. Charges and countercharges, suits and countersuits—I couldn't begin to follow it. Meanwhile, huge rush-hour lines built up twice a day on the partially closed road. Not wanting to sit in traffic, people took the exit near my office and continued their journeys on my street. They've been doing that in one form or another for more than a decade—which is part of the reason there was so much congestion on the street, and part of the reason Madonna was in my office for so long.

Move to the country, buy extra-thick insulated windows—middle-class Americans like me are unlikely to face the extreme choices that will confront people in de-

veloping nations. As Meadows says, we will be able to buy our way out of some problems. But that does not mean that Americans will escape the repercussions of population growth. In 1990 the United States had 249 million inhabitants. Current Census Bureau projections foresee that births and immigration will drive that number to 345 million by 2030. Ninety-six million more Americans! Imagine everything that local, state, and federal governments

will have to do to accommodate them. Think of all the thoughtful planning that will be required to make life pleasant. Whether it will happen "is an absolutely open question, in my judgment," says Allen Kelley, an economist at Duke University. "We're talking about political theory, and there just *is* no theory for this."

The future is not completely opaque. Demographers know roughly where those 96 million new Americans will live, who they will be, and what they will do. The Census Bureau projects that the extra people will not distribute themselves in an even blanket over the country. About half will choose to live in just three states: California, Texas, and Florida. Not one of these can absorb its share easily. California has too little water, Texas an unsteady economy, Florida a particularly troubled set of ecosystems. All three will also need many new roads, bridges, sewers, and schools—an expensive proposition.

Relatively few of the newcomers will be white. By 2030 about 40 percent of Americans will have ancestral roots in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. Few would disagree that people of color have long been at the bottom of the American pyramid. If that continues, many of the 96 million will be poor, and in the twenty-first century a bigger percentage of the U.S. population will be below the poverty level than is now. If that does not continue, white Americans will for the first time face nonwhite power centers. California, Texas, and Florida will have three of the four biggest voting blocs in the House of Representatives (the fourth will be New York's). All three could be dominated by Hispanics and African-Americans. If history is any guide, either alternative will put white Americans' moral grace sorely to the test.

The United States has a long border with Mexico, and thousands of miles of coastline. Migrants want to come in, and Americans seem increasingly diffident about putting out the welcome mat. (In 1991 Argentina's president publicly toyed with the idea of resettling skilled refugees at a price of about \$50,000 a head.) Meanwhile, rising numbers will thrust together the blacks, whites, yellows, browns,

and reds who are already here in ways they have not been before. Political turmoil is increasing in Europe—especially in France and Germany—as migrants from Africa, the Middle East, and the former Soviet bloc demand a piece of the better life. Population growth did not cause ethnic conflicts, but it could sharpen them.

At the same time, the United States will have to address its age shift. Census Bureau projections tell a sobering story. By 2030, one out of five Americans will be sixty-five or older. The ratio of elderly people to people of working age will have tripled since 1950, meaning that, on average, workers will have to support three times as many older people. (The figure may be offset somewhat by the smaller number of children there will be to support. But the problem will be amplified by the growing number of people in their sixties and seventies who will be taking care of still more elderly people, in their eighties and nineties.) Workers, meanwhile, will be facing gloomier prospects. Nowadays fewer older people are alive than younger people, which means that there is an approximate match between the small number of older workers and the small number of important jobs. As the population ages, this will change. "In a stationary population," Ansley Coale, the Princeton demographer, has written, "there would no longer be a reasonable expectation of advancement as a person moves through life." More and more people will find themselves trapped in dead-end jobs. In some ways, Coale suggests, we may end up looking back with envy at the days of rapid population growth.

People will have to deal with the frustration—at the same time that they seek politicians able to resolve all the other problems. An optimist can say that the American people are kind, clever, and adaptable. An optimist can say that Americans can resolve the difficulties described, and the others these will inspire. But even an optimist must conclude that the government will have its hands full, and might well wonder what it will be like to live in a future America that must balance so much so artfully. My guess is that it will be something like living in New York City today.

Because I had nothing else to do, I walked along the last remaining section of the West Side Highway one recent Friday afternoon—a masochistic act. The road is officially under construction, and so its shoulders have not been cleaned up. Heaps of trash lie in windblown aggregations. The walls are gray and peeling. Cars move slowly and impatiently, in billows of exhaust. It is like an evocation of an unpleasant future. New York City took a hit in the recession, and the familiar assortment of urban evils got worse. Unemployment and crack use went up;

real estate values, tax revenues, and bond ratings went down. The city fabric sprang a hundred big leaks. Like so many Dutch boys, the city fathers raced to plug them. Meanwhile, a thousand interest groups scrabbled to protect themselves. Understandably, fixing the highway seems not to have assumed pressing importance.

That day on the West Side Highway, I heard many radios played at high volume. I could see the point. License plates came from Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; drivers were commuting for hours to sit in traffic. Only part of their daily grind was due to the sheer size of New York; traffic jams afflict much smaller cities. But a three-hour commute is what some architects call a "disamenity." The waiting, the ugly walls, the blaring horns, the inability to get away from it all: these are the disamenities of overpopulation in rich societies. None is directly attributable to population growth. Each is an emblem of bureaucratic overload—overload caused by the hundred predicaments that population growth aggravates. The city could have fixed the West Side Highway long ago. So could the state, or the federal government. But they didn't. There are too many other, bigger concerns, and there will be for a long time. My Madonna problem is not going to vanish.

Population growth forces nations to confront problems that they could finesse in less crowded times. The inefficiencies of New York's highways surely mattered less when the metropolitan area held eight million people rather than fifteen. Governments may, as economists hope, avoid the major, life-threatening disasters. "Even Congress isn't stupid enough to avoid dealing with the ozone layer," one economist told me. Americans may create a society that can hold an older, darker-colored population. But while they are doing that, the disamenities accrue, making the future a grayer, grimmer place. Per capita GNP may go up and up, but life will be less pleasant. How much less pleasant? The answer depends on the strength of the citizenry's desire to have a government that works much more flexibly and wisely than government does now. New Yorkers to date have shown little such inclination.

Down by Wall Street the West Side Highway has been demolished. The reconstructed roadway passes a few blocks to the west of the building where I saw those people on the gurneys. My guess is that most of its inhabitants—the real ones, I mean—have moved on. More have moved in, though. We're marching into the future together. Curtains are visible from the highway. There's some lawn furniture on the roof. It makes me wonder who owns it, and what they do, and whether, like me, they have children. □

You shouldn't have to s own to own a car t

Who says that only really expensive luxury cars should offer sophisticated engine technology, a driver's side airbag and anti-lock brakes?

After all, they're all standard on the Honda Civic EX Sedan. It's a car that built its reputation on being economical. And that now does a beautiful job of bringing both economy and luxury together under one roof. Or, to be more precise, under one moonroof.

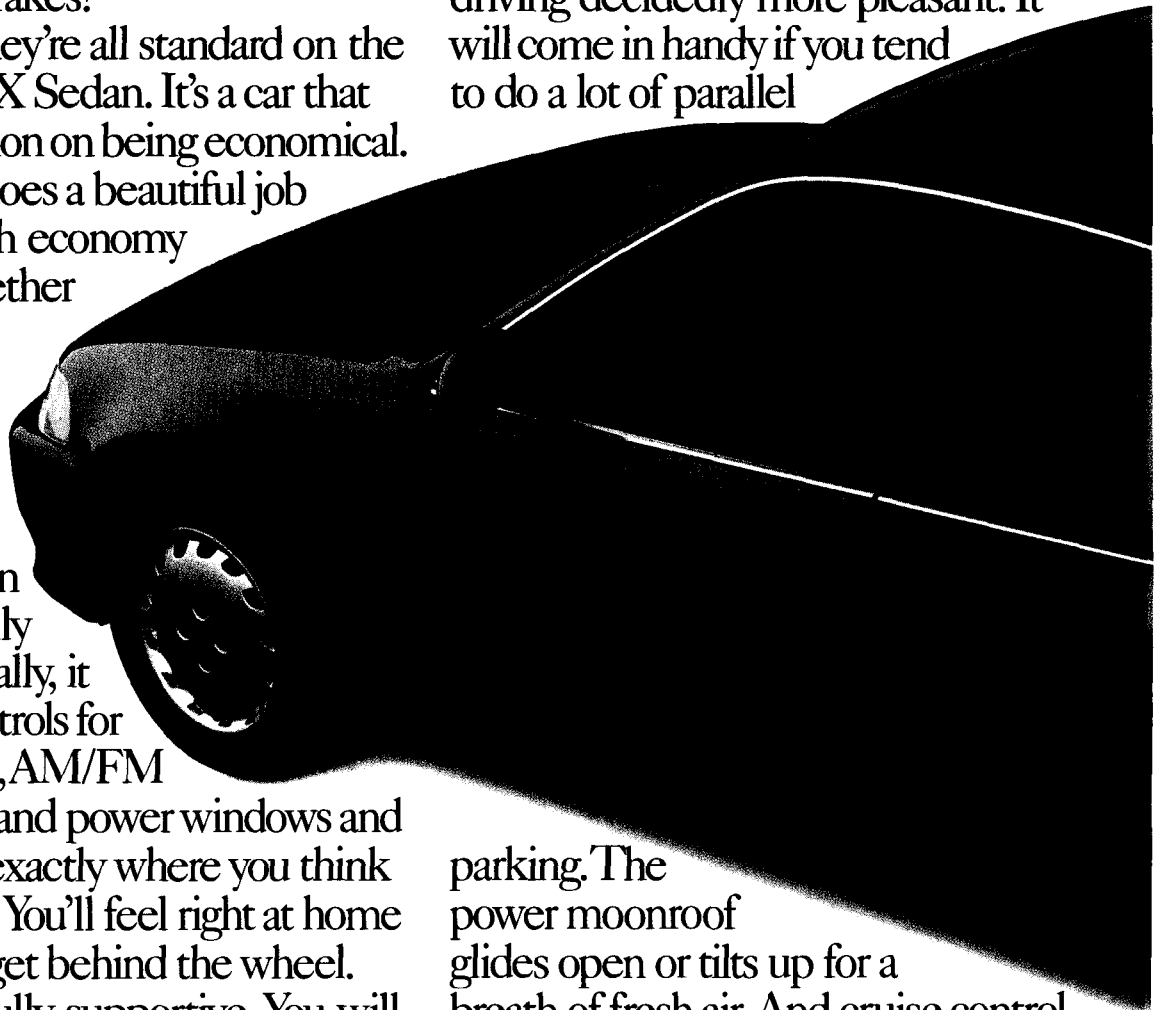
This car's interior has been very thoughtfully designed. Actually, it is intuitive. Controls for air conditioning, AM/FM stereo cassette and power windows and door locks are exactly where you think they should be. You'll feel right at home as soon as you get behind the wheel.

Seats are fully supportive. You will appreciate this the more you drive. You will also appreciate the convenient fold down rear seatback. It's lockable.

A cleverly placed beverage holder

is easy to reach. There's plush carpeting everywhere. (Even in the trunk.)

Steering is power-assisted to make driving decidedly more pleasant. It will come in handy if you tend to do a lot of parallel



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sacrifice everything you that has everything.

lets the engine breathe more efficiently at every speed. Basically, this is the way it works: At higher RPMs, the engine's computer instructs the intake valves in each one of the four

cylinders to open farther and stay open longer. This, in turn, lets in more air and fuel. As a result, the engine produces an impressive amount of power. You'll get a kick out of it.

Especially when you find yourself out on your favorite stretch of curvy road. You will see that ride and handling have been greatly refined to a level you'd expect to find on a much more expensive car. We attribute this to our double wishbone suspension on all four wheels. And to the fact that this car has a longer wheelbase than any car in its class. So the ride is more stable. And there is more interior room. Making the EX Sedan everything you could want in a car.

H H O N D A

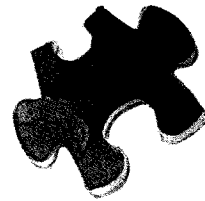
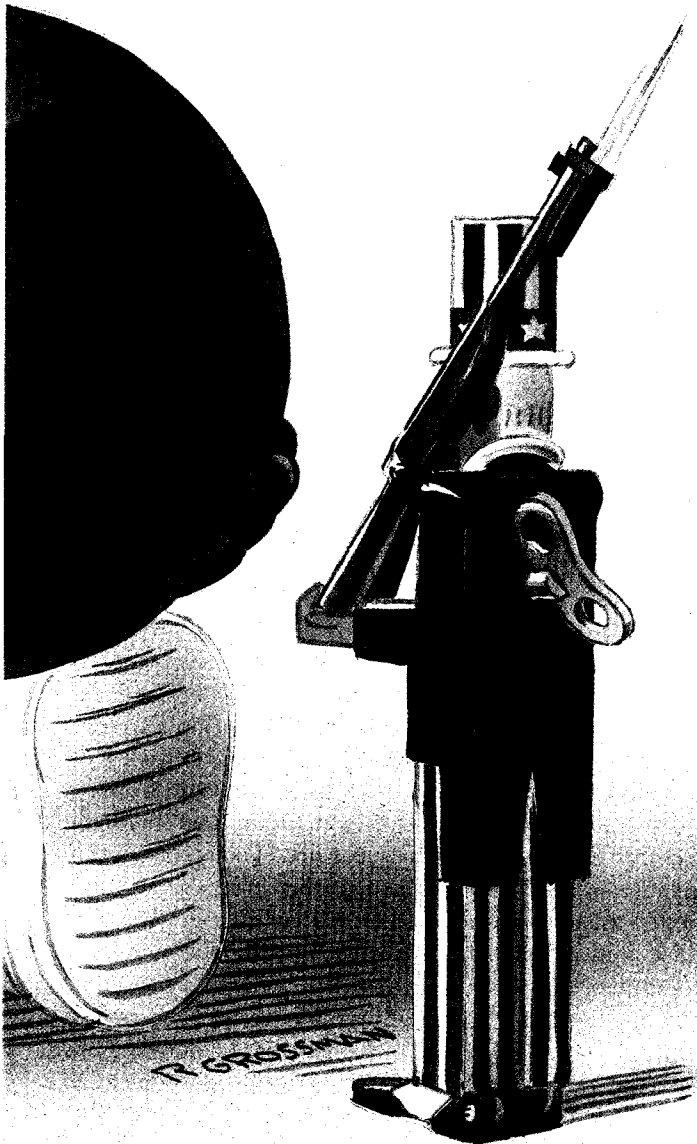
The Civic EX Sedan



The nation must put its domestic necessities at the core of its relations with the world. This, the author argues, is a counsel not of isolationism—a shibboleth used to suppress fresh thought—but of realism

CLINTON'S WORLD

BY ALAN TONELSON



ALTHOUGH BILL CLINTON WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT on a platform of domestic renovation, he knows that he will not be able to avoid foreign-policy challenges. To judge by his major campaign addresses on foreign policy, he is less cognizant of the constraints he will face in meeting them, which are both real and intellectual. The chief real constraint is financial; the intellectual constraints are assumptions left over from the Cold War—encrusted ways of thinking about the world and about U.S. power which are prevalent not only among conservatives and Republicans but also among Democrats like him. Herewith a primer on the realities that will shape the first post-Cold War foreign policy.

The Fiscal Crunch

FOR MUCH OF THE POST-SECOND WORLD WAR PERIOD American leaders have struggled to fund history's most sweeping foreign-policy agenda while satisfying the American public's entirely understandable desire for more government benefits and guarantees—just like those enjoyed in most of the advanced industrialized countries we have defended. Complicating the challenge have been Americans' limited appetite for higher taxes, the economy's inability to grow as fast as the popular demand for social spending, and the fact that the costs of our foreign-policy responsibilities

and consequent defense burdens have not been borne by our protectorates. Rather than cut domestic programs or significantly reduce defense spending, American Presidents from Lyndon Johnson to George Bush simply ran enormous budget or international-payments deficits.

With debt repayments now exceeding our military budgets each year, it's clear that profligacy is no longer a workable fiscal policy. The demise of the Soviet Union may have let us off the hook by permitting us to "do more with less," as Clinton has argued. But the new President intends to cut defense spending by only five percent more than President Bush would have, and thus to leave our military budget significantly higher in real terms than it was in 1981—shortly after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.

These cuts will shrink military spending as a share of gross national product down to a level (3.5 percent) not seen since before Pearl Harbor. If we could afford defense budgets that ate up eight or nine percent of GNP thirty and forty years ago, some foreign-policy mandarins wonder, why can't we afford this relatively much smaller defense burden today?

There are two reasons. First, we had an even more parsimonious welfare state then than we have now, along with a much smaller deficit. Therefore it was easier to be fiscally responsible while accommodating heavy defense spending. Of course, in terms of raw numbers, the main culprits responsible for the big deficits have been greatly expanded and underfunded domestic programs—chiefly entitlements indexed to inflation. But as Clinton recognizes, a deficit-reduction plan that zeroes in on entitlements alone is a deficit-reduction plan going nowhere.

Second, optimism about funding our international agenda seems to assume that we're already meeting our domestic needs pretty well. Yet even if entitlements could be slashed, the new President favors spending vast new sums on infrastructure and education. His plans for addressing the health-care crisis, the drug crisis, and the urban crisis will surely cost a great deal as well. And his desire to give business tax incentives to encourage productive investment (not to mention giving tax relief to the middle class) will also strain the budget—at least in the short run.

Moreover, as the outgoing budget director, Richard Darman, warned, there are literally hundreds of billions of dollars in underfunded, off-budget federal liabilities—deposit insurance, mortgages, student loans, small and minority business loans—lying in wait, in his memorable phrase, like hidden Pac-Men, ready to gobble up lines of resource dots if economic conditions stay sluggish enough long enough.

Deep cuts in U.S. defense spending alone—which would inevitably mean a very different, less grandiose foreign policy—would not solve our budget crisis. But they could help break the fundamental budgetary impasse, which is not economic but political. By supporting

a defense establishment that will consume nearly one of every five tax dollars for the indefinite future, the policies that Clinton espoused during the campaign practically guarantee a further weakening of the compact that must lie at the heart of successful tax policy in any reasonably democratic system: the taxpayer will pay only if he is persuaded that most of his money will be spent in a way that benefits him.

Because the United States is so secure geopolitically, it has always been difficult for American Presidents to persuade voters to make sacrifices for national-security objectives like anti-communist containment in far-off regions. That's why Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon tried to fight in Vietnam on a business-as-usual basis. Now that the Cold War is over, how will American leaders justify the "shared sacrifice" that all thinking people acknowledge is necessary to solve the budget crisis—and do so, moreover, while so much of our national wealth goes to defending rich economic rivals, such as Germany and Japan, against threats that no longer exist? Without a presidential confession that Washington's priorities have long neglected domestic needs, together with energetic efforts to right the balance, voters probably won't respond.

How Much World Order?

THE DEMISE OF THE SOVIET UNION, RISING ethnic and regional conflict around the globe, and George Bush's use of the term "new world order" set off a classic modern American foreign-policy debate about which of two utopian goals we should stake our national security and prosperity on: global stability or the worldwide triumph of democracy. Bush was seen—notably by Democrats—as having surrendered to prudence, siding with stability and kowtowing to tyrants who were doomed to fall. He countered by emphasizing the strategic importance of some dictatorships and the urgent need in a nuclear world to prevent complete international chaos.

Though loath to admit it, the two sides are promoting ideas rooted in the same venerable ground of American diplomatic thinking—namely, that the nation's welfare depends critically on a benign international environment. But American history has never borne this out. We have thrived even though we have been surrounded by dictatorships for most of our national life. Today, in a world greatly shrunk by technology, the international environment arguably affects us more than ever. At the same time, this environment is just as arguably becoming less controllable.

A more orderly, more democratic world would of course be wonderful. But both goals seem fanciful. Thus we need to stop thinking of foreign-policy planning as an exercise in creating wish lists and instead focus on questions that can actually provide useful guidance for policy-makers: How much international order and democracy do

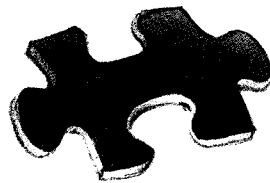
we really need? Are there some regions where we don't need much at all? What is achieving our goals worth to us in the way of defense and aid resources and human lives? What will it take in the way of economic resources to advance these goals? How are budget planners to proceed? How will we know when we have succeeded? Most important, given the difficulty of promoting peace and democratic change, and given our budgetary constraints, how can we enhance our own security and prosperity if much of the world remains turbulent and oppressed? What are our fallback positions—in other words, how can we hedge?

Nowhere is this new approach needed more than in our relations with the former Soviet Union—too big and too badly broken down to fix anytime soon with any politically realistic amount of Western aid, and still armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons. Aid programs designed to give Russian democracy “a fighting chance,” in Clinton's words, implicitly admit that the situation is already hopeless. A truly responsible President would start thinking a lot more about shielding America from the worst effects of anarchy in this huge region. One way to do this would be to withdraw the vast majority of our military forces from Europe, and not leave 75,000–100,000 soldiers, as Clinton has suggested doing. If disorder in the former communist world spreads, American soldiers should be as far away as possible. Moreover, if Clinton really is worried that a nuclear conflict among the former Soviet republics will endanger America, he'll devote a much larger share of defense spending to the task of developing conventional weapons that can find and destroy weapons of mass destruction held by any untrustworthy forces before they are used. In other words, in some instances the new international realities will force us to become more, not less, interventionist.

How Much Interdependence?

MANY FOREIGN-POLICY DOERS AND THINKERS view interdependence and its close relatives cooperation and globalization as America's salvation. These conditions are supposed to make great-power conflict obsolete—much as it was supposed, by Sir Norman Angell at least, on the eve of the First World War that the dense web of commerce connecting the great European powers made peace too profitable to jeopardize, at any rate for very long. Moreover, they are supposed to be the key to solving a series of new “transna-

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tional” problems, such as drug abuse, AIDS, and environmental destruction.

The idea seems to be that once mankind understands just how widespread interdependence *et al.* have become and what their true implications are, international relations will become an essentially harmonious enterprise. Power will no longer be important, and the struggle for advantage and for relative position will end. Regarding transnational problems, all countries will recognize that they have a stake in the solutions, and will promptly identify those responses that reason says are in every country's true best interests. It's the dream world of America's early-twentieth-century Progressives and other “good government” types revived and writ large. In the realm of economics, governments and special interests will finally recognize that nation-states have become anachronisms, step out of the way, and let capital flow to wherever in the world it will reap the highest return. The resulting international division of labor, based on nothing but considerations of efficiency, will bring the greatest good for the greatest

number. It is hard to find a major official American speech on foreign economic policy which fails to endorse these goals wholeheartedly.

Of course, interdependence, cooperation, and globalization are extremely important and becoming more so. But they hardly eliminate the need to think in terms of power and advantage. What the mainstream forgets is that they are inevitably complex. As long as we live in a world of multiple sovereign political units (and economic integration in Europe and elsewhere doesn't alter this reality; it simply changes the size of the units), these conditions will have structure, and particular content. And their structure and content are going to be determined by someone or something. If we assume that states will all have the same preferences as to how to solve problems, then power may indeed be unimportant. Similarly, we need not worry about power if we assume that whose preferences prevail is unimportant. But all those who assume that the different sizes, locations, strengths, cultures, and histories of states and other units will regularly produce different preferences, some of them more desirable than others, will care deeply about power. They will care because in all negotiations not refereed by a commonly accepted authority, power will decide which preferences prevail. Only an academic political scientist could seriously argue that success at international negotiations is a matter of convincing one's interlocutor that one's ideas have everyone's best interests at heart. Winners are determined not primarily by

merit but by how much material wherewithal they bring to the table—the better to bribe or coerce others or to create realities that others must accommodate.

Hence the growing importance of interdependence *et al.* demands that the United States pay much more attention than it has so far to accumulating and preserving national military and economic strength. This shift, in turn, requires us to rethink our determination to put America's economic fate entirely in the hands of free-market forces, an objective that makes it all too easy to rationalize the loss of key industries and technologies to other countries. In an age of interdependence, intelligent economic nationalism—striking a balance between efficiency and self-reliance—becomes more important than ever.

The Romanization of American Life

THE VERY PROMINENCE OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN American life for the past forty years has seriously warped American politics, society, and culture. During the Cold War this Romanization of American life was probably unavoidable. But we need to rethink it now that we are no longer maintaining a state of national emergency.

America's defining political system, which consists in a limited government resting on the principle of the separation of powers, was never meant to help exercise the kind of active world leadership that we have pursued since 1945. Decades of an outsized foreign policy have put it under considerable strain. That foreign policy has produced excessive secrecy in government. It has helped to imbue our leadership classes inside and outside government with a contempt for the man in the street which has been growing since the 1930s—when the public ostensibly was determined to ignore the fascist threat—and contributed to the alienation from these leaders that Americans have developed in return.

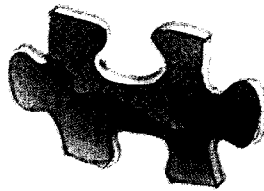
The Romanization of American life has also generated some troubling theories about America's national identity and purpose which have become all too uncontroversial. Specifically, many of us have come to believe that America will never be true to its best traditions unless it is engaged in some kind of world mission, that creating a more perfect United States is not a noble or an ambitious enough goal for a truly great people, that we will be morally and spiritually deficient unless we continue to be the kind of globe-girdling power we have been for the past half century.

One important strain of the conventional wisdom has seen the lack of connection between national-security imperatives and America's eighteenth-century political institutions as evidence that the institutions should be brought up-to-date. Yet the end of the Cold War reveals another possibility: that we should work harder to put national security in its proper place. We need, for example, to move away from viewing public opinion as an impediment to an effective foreign policy. To the contrary, public opinion in this geopolitically secure and economically strong country has been serving as a desperately needed commonsense check on the utopian security and economic designs of the foreign-policy industry. The more democratic foreign-policy decision-making in America becomes, the more effective it may well be. Consequently, the new President should start thinking about ways to open up the process, perhaps using some variant of Ross Perot's electronic town hall to permit the public to make the kinds of foreign-policy decisions in which the national-security stakes are low but the risks to certain groups of Americans are potentially great—for example, military intervention in a strategically marginal hot spot like Bosnia.

Above all, Bill Clinton needs to understand that foreign policy is not an end in itself but a means to a highly specific end: enhancing the safety and prosperity of the American people. A domestic focus is imperative not in order to rebuild the foundation for American world leadership but to prepare America for a world that cannot be led or stabilized or organized or managed in any meaningful sense of those words.

Tying foreign-policy initiatives tightly to domestic needs will unquestionably carry risks. Third World conflicts we ignore might spread, regions in which we reduce our military presence might become less stable, opportunities to bolster international law and institutions might be lost for years or forever, and one day America might indeed rue a decision to retrench.

But the risks of continuing to neglect domestic problems or of seeking their solutions in promoting millennial global change are much greater—and they are not conjectural. Recognizing these risks is not a matter of being a declinist or a protectionist or an isolationist. It is not a matter of sticking our heads in the sand. It is not a matter of being selfish or parochial. It is a matter of drawing axiomatic distinctions—between needs and wants, between the likely and the unlikely, between present realities and future hopes. It is a matter, that is, of governing. □



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sponsor's continuing support made it possible for PLAN International to supply school uniforms and pay school fees that would have been impossible for Angela's father to afford.

Because of what didn't happen, here's what did happen. Angela became an excellent student, having finished high school with high marks. She is now eighteen, and has also graduated from the Childreach sponsorship program.

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☐ CENTRAL AMERICA/CARIBBEAN: ☐ Guatemala ☐ Honduras ☐ El Salvador
☐ Dominican Republic
☐ ASIA: ☐ Indonesia ☐ India ☐ Nepal ☐ Philippines ☐ Thailand
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My check for \$22 for the first month's sponsorship is enclosed.

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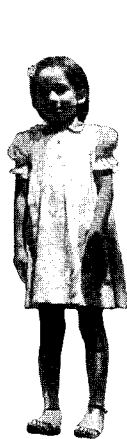
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Angela
in 1978.



Angela
in 1982.



Angela
in 1987.



Angela
in 1991.

A Short Story



The Legendary Lowry Greither

by E. S. Goldman

THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS FIRST MADE IN THEIR language, and then translated. They were to keep seated. They should not stand in the aisle. Their disembarkation from the plane would be briefly delayed.

If he was the reason for the delay, they were moving a day or two faster than they were supposed to in these somnolent latitudes. Greither composed himself to appear uninterested. Three men in uniforms shouldered in. One had the mean face of management material, a junior officer who could become dictator.

"Señor Greither," he demanded. "Who?"

"Greither. Here."

Get up, come with me, the officer motioned him.

"What is the problem? *Problema?*" He opened his document wallet and showed his visa. "I am an American citizen." The officer took the paper and the wallet, too, and urged him to be in more of a hurry. They took his briefcase and travel bag, his hat and raincoat from the overhead. He was led out while the other passengers stared. The cabin attendant looked at him with concern. Did she think he was a drug baron? A famous swindler? The fear was tighter in his lungs than he had expected it to be, but authenticity had a price, and the notion that he was regarded as a person-age exhilarated him.

"Not to worry," he assured her.

He was hurried into the back seat of a military jeep, between two soldiers. The

officer took the seat beside the driver. Greither asked again, without effect, "What is the *problema?* I am an ordinary American citizen."

He was driven to a hard-used colonial stone building and hustled through a dim lobby furnished with a high court bench on which no one sat to receive a petition, down halls and up stairs depressingly lighted by spattered light bulbs, into a cell. He had not fully realized how radically the scenario could be revised. He should be in an office. A curious official should be discussing with him clarification of his identity.

He called out, "American consul! *Por favor.* You must tell

the American consul!" as the door was locked in his face.

Gray light seeped from a small barred window on the opposite wall. From American television Greither recognized the poster portrait of the country's youthful colonel, wearing his father's hat. Separated by an aisle the width of a small table were two cots. One was occupied by a human bulk, naked to the waist.

"*Buenos días,*" Greither said, to begin a good relationship.

The senior resident, waking, replied with a guttural, and then another that by intonation was a question.

Greither pointed to himself. "Greither. *Norteamericano.* U.S.A."

The man hefted his body to a sitting position while he scratched his shoulders awake and cleared heavy phlegm into a tin can that had begun to filigree with rust. He tapped his chest.

"*La tos.*"

"*La Tos, yes. Sí. Buenos días, Señor La Tos.*"

The senior prisoner attempted twice to speak before settling on the sound of revelation: "Ahhhhh." He hawked more phlegm into the can. "*La tos.*" He again tapped his chest. "Juan Deriba."

In the manner of somebody influenced by the speech of a foreigner, a southerner, or a child, Greither replied,

"Ahhhhh. Excuse. *Buenos días, Señor Juan Deriba.*"

Deriba hunched himself awake a little more and stretched his jaws, revealing a wreckage of teeth. He mumbled, "*Norteameri-*

cano," and reflected on the implications. On his left hand only stubs remained of two fingers that had not got clear of something fast enough. He wore canvas pants and shoes made of inflexible planks of leather. A splayed sombrero and a sunstruck, washed-out plaid shirt hung on nails in the wall behind him. Greither took off his tie and sweated shirt and hung them on his own nail.

Deriba expressed the pleasure he would get from a cigarette, and was disappointed that the new prisoner did not smoke. Greither hoped Deriba had no friends outside to bring him CARE packages. He did not think he could survive cigarette smoke in this room, dense with sweaty,

*He was under arrest in a foreign land,
confident that the truth would set him free.
But what was the truth?*

stinking air, better suited to a gilled transitional species.

They were without conversation for a few moments until Deriba, through gestures, asked why Greither was there. Greither indicated that he didn't know, an answer Deriba derided. The senior prisoner described himself as a farmer of some kind. Greither understood that it had to do with trees. In turn, Greither explained his work. Deriba grasped that the American did something about rectangular objects—buildings. Did something on top of buildings, over buildings. Did not build, but what? Defended houses from attack by birds? A profession with which Deriba was not familiar. He looked at the American appraisingly as if to discover what muscles or mental qualities were needed to defend houses against birds. Not birds?

"No? Ahhh—*la bomba!*"

Good enough. It made no difference if Deriba mistook the sale of roofing materials for fending off bombs or if Greither thought that Deriba picked fruit. This was merely social information; they might as well tell each other fairy tales to pass the time.

The room darkened. Through the barred square in the door they heard traffic and voices in the corridor. Deriba became somber and withdrew to the corner of his bed, pulling himself into a bundle and lying back against the wall. "Olmo," he muttered, more to himself than to Greither. They heard scuffling sounds, and a shout: "*Yo soy Sebastián Olmo de Ayotla!*"

Greither recognized the words as nouns, as a person's name. A person either was being called up or was announcing himself to anyone within hearing. The man was then almost certainly struck; a groan escaped, and Greither heard the sound of a group receding.

"*La interrogación . . .*," Deriba said, defining it as hair screwed tight, a finger hammered, an eyelid pinched, a kick in the pit of the back, a punch in *los testículos*.

"You?" Greither asked.

The reply apparently meant either "not yet" or "we will not discuss it."

In the drowse of night Greither had a reverie of Nina's baffled look on receiving word that her husband was in a

Central American jail. Her mouth opened without words. Her tongue moistened her lips. Her eyes searched for enlightenment. "What?" She had never before heard anything so incredible. "That's crazy," she eventually said, when strange things came to her attention. He listened to her say "That's crazy," and felt a little comforted.

IN THE MORNING, AFTER GREITHER VISITED THE toilet at the end of the hall and was given a breakfast of larded bread and bitter soup which he handed to Deriba, two guards came for him. For

a moment in the corridor he thought to announce himself as Olmo had, but it seemed an embarrassing thing to do. It was not his style; he was not one of them.

He was taken to a large office on the ground floor, in which an officer sat at a desk reviewing papers contained in a red pressboard folder. His youth was obscured by a rampant black beard, which did not end until it arrived at his chest and divided in the Hapsburg manner. A clearing had been cut in the brush to admit a cigar. He wore the shoulder insignia of a major. He looked up at the prisoner thoughtfully and pointed to the chair in which he was to sit.

"Mr. Lowry F. Greither, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Whom do you come to see in my country?" the major said, by way of announcing that his side of the interview would be

competent and in excellent, if slightly accented, English. *Pittsboorgh. Whum* as in *Tecumseh*.

"Major, I didn't come to see anybody. I don't know anybody here. I came to look around, like any ordinary tourist. I read in *The New York Times* that your country welcomed visitors."

"Mr. Greither, do you like our detention facilities?"

"No, sir, not especially, and I would certainly be glad to clear up any misunderstanding that got me here."

"Whom did you come to see?"

"I don't know anybody here, major. A mistake has been made. I have a few days of holiday and came to see



your volcano and the ruins of the pueblo and the cathedral and so on."

"You are a person of consequence. You are our guest only overnight, and already reporters are inquiring for you."

"I wouldn't know anything about that. I am vice-president for customer services of a roofing company. When I was taken into custody, all my identification, including my passport, was taken. Somebody here has those papers."

On the major's desk was a plastic tub, like the vegetable bin of a refrigerator, in which Greither now saw an edge of his green passport case showing among papers. "I'm not telling you anything you don't know. I see my documents on your desk."

The major was more interested in his file. "Already in your *Pittsboorgh Post-Gazette* newspaper you are missing. The headline read to me by Miss Bonfils, of your Associated Press, is, I quote to you, 'Pittsboorgh Man Missing.'"

"I have a family. I guess I could be missed."

"Is it customary? A man takes a holiday and his family reports him missing?"

"I was traveling on business in the U.S.A. I had a few open days. I decided on the spur of the moment to come here. I had no reason to tell anybody I was in any particular place."

"I see. Let me read more to you. 'Believed to Be CIA.'"

"That's absolutely preposterous. Why would anybody say anything like that?"

"Yes, why?"

The major returned the page to the file and took out another. "You have friends. Yesterday morning our director of airport security received a letter. I read: 'Aboard LineaSur Flight 247, arriving from Mexico City 11:35, November 2'—that is to say, yesterday—'Lowry F. Greither, of the Central Intelligence Agency, U.S.A.' Signed 'A Friend of Your Cause.' So, he is your friend and our friend. Mutual, as Mr. Dickens would say."

"Major, this couldn't be more preposterous."

"Agreed. As the preposterous is not normal, do you wish to stay in detention while it is investigated—as you would do in your own country—or will you tell me now whom did you come to see?"

"I've given you the honest answer. Nobody. I don't know anybody. I'm a tourist."

"Not, perhaps, Sebastián Olmo?"

Greither showed that that was even more preposterous than what had gone before. "If you are speaking of the man who called out his name in the hall last night, that's exactly all I know about him. That's it. No more."

"You know a different Sebastián Olmo?"

"No Sebastián Olmos. I don't know anybody. The other man in my cell, Señor Deriba, told me it was Olmo, and the man called out his name. It may have been a guard who called it out. Major, this is all completely preposterous."

"The man in detention with you knows Olmo?"

"I don't know who people know here. I was taken from the airplane and put in jail. Deriba was there. I know about Deriba what two men who are together for a few hours and don't speak the same language know. Nothing."

"We are not stupid, Señor Greither. We know the CIA has hidden arms in our country. You have come to tell some criminal scum the places. You discuss bombs with Señor Juan Deriba, whom you don't know."

Bombs! Greither had weakened the usefulness of "preposterous" and could think of no replacement sufficient to show how utterly he rejected the major's hallucinations. He tried "lunacy." What the major was proposing was *lunacy*. Greither was a man who had taken an impulsive holiday. His arrival may have innocently intersected some piece of intelligence they had. He knew nothing about it. "Bomb" had been just a word said, a misunderstanding about his work, which was roofing, as the file would confirm—

"I see," the comandante said. "You may look at it differently after another night to think it over."

He directed the guards to lead the prisoner away. Greither resisted and shouted, "I demand to see the American consul! I demand to make a telephone call to the American consul!"

"Your country does not favor us with consuls," the major said, as the *norteamericano* was jerked out of the room.

Behind him in the corridor echoed his demand that the ambassador of whatever country was taking care of U.S. affairs be notified that Lowry Greither, an American citizen, was being held incommunicado in a stinking cell on false charges. The British. The Swiss. The French. The Red Cross. The length of the corridor, up the stairs, down the next corridor.

"Lowry Greither, U.S.A." he shouted while he waited for the door to his cell to be unlocked. A kick in the pit of his back sent him through the door.

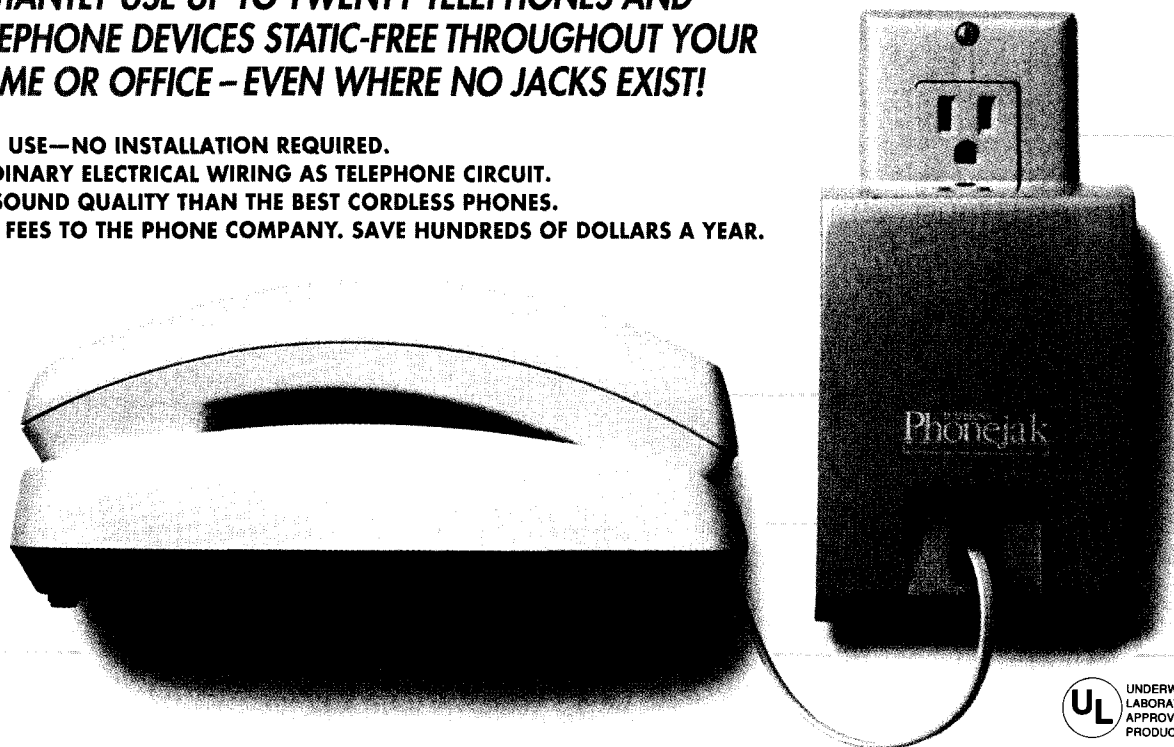
Two guards came, this time for Deriba. He assured them that he would make no disturbance. He wished only to announce his name so that the others would know he was alive and well. "*Yo soy Juan Deriba. Vivo en Quetalarba.*" They were on him with blows. An hour later they brought him back, looking like a barefisted fighter who had lost. They dumped him on his bed and went out. He lay on his stomach, face toward Greither, an arm hanging to the floor, his exhalations moans.

"Jesus, Jesus, Deriba," Greither muttered, "what the hell kind of world is this?" He got up from the bed, straightening against the soreness in his back where he had been kicked. He wet his shirt in the water pitcher and attempted to cleanse Deriba's bloody face wounds. He let water dribble into the side of Deriba's mouth and sponged down his back. Deriba struggled to consciousness and turned toward the water cup Greither offered. His nose was unhinged and dripping blood. An ear was

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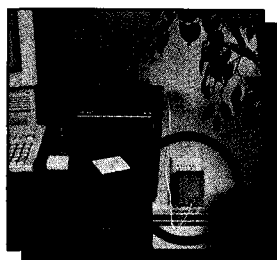
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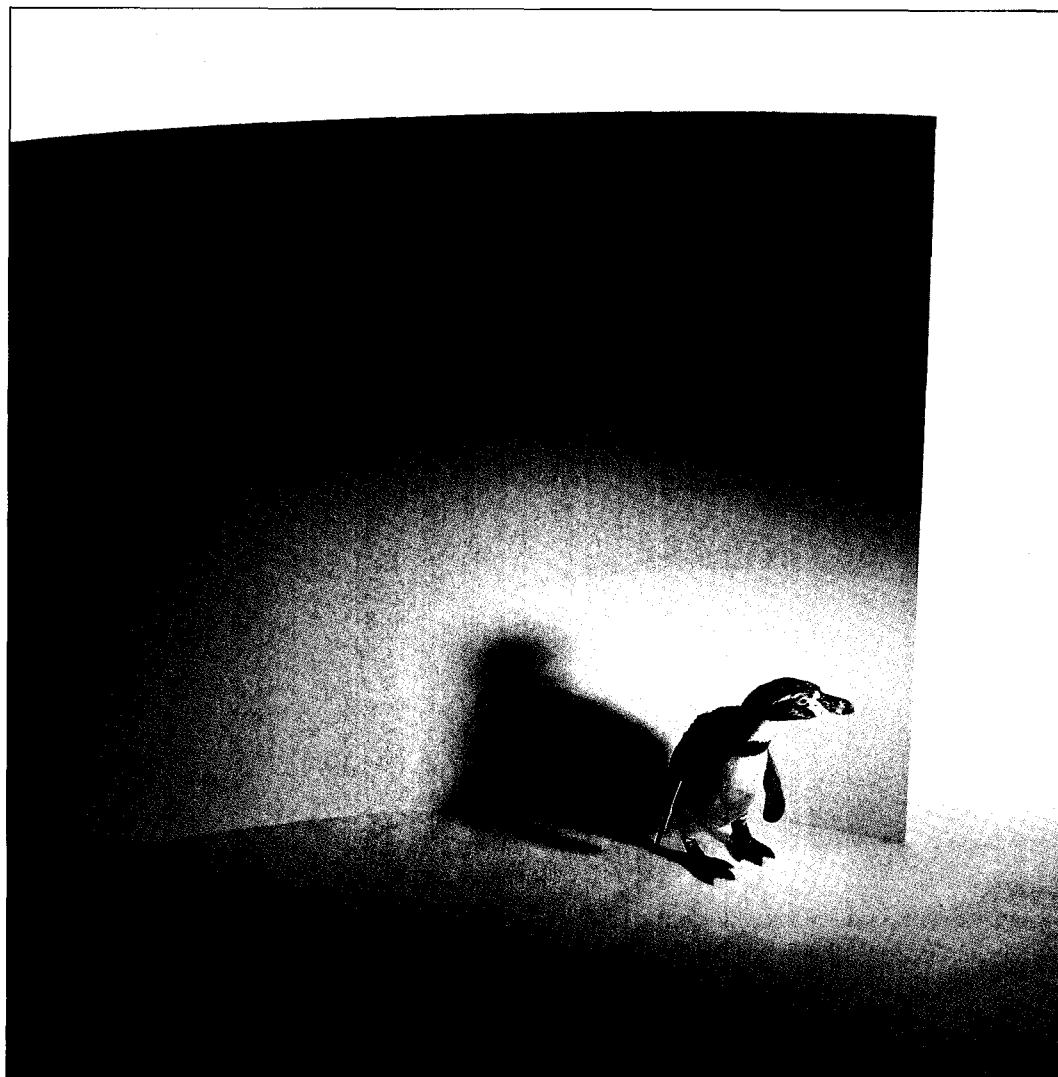


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swollen fat and torn. Both eyes were bruised over, but he could see, and he kept them on Greither until he finished sucking at the cup. He raised a hand slowly, pointing—

You.

"Me. I." Greither understood. "I go? I take? No?"

Deriba began again laboriously. Greither leaned to wipe away blood glittering under Deriba's nose and at a corner of his mouth.

You.

"Me. I take? I give? I give—they . . . I give them—you?"

"*Mi nombre.*"

"Your name? I give them your name?" *I gave them your name?* which he pantomimed as passing a secret.

Deriba replied with a short hiss: "*Sí.*"

"No, no! I did no such thing. I did not give them your name. No! Do you understand? Savvy? I did not give them your name! What about? What do I have to give? I know nothing."

Deriba hissed again: "CIA."

"Not CIA. If they said I gave you to them, they fooled you. Do you understand? I gave them nothing. They fooled you. Not CIA. Do you understand? Nothing!"

Greither continued to reject the accusation every way he knew, until Deriba held up his hand—

I.

You? Me?

Now the subject was known and the exchange went swiftly.

I gave them you, Deriba mimed. *I gave you to the major. "Le entregué al comandante. Lo siento."* He was sorry. They had confused him, they had beat him, it was done. He turned to the wall.

LYING ON HIS BED IN THE YELLOW LIGHT THAT filtered into his cell, Greither kept a listless eye on Deriba. Greither was hungry and itched from sweat and dirt. Flies taunted him. Where he had been kicked he ached from a bone-deep bruise. He had been taken by barbarians. They could deal with him as they wished. What had Nina thought when the paper called to ask if she knew where her husband was, before the reporter told her what he knew?

Well, yes, down south on business. He called from Tampa last Friday. What's all this about?

They had a story that her husband was believed to be a CIA agent in a Central American country. What did she know about it?

She would say that was crazy, but she would be nagged by the possibility. Would she have called David? *Dave, I don't know what to do. Your father disappeared. It's going to be in the paper that he may be a CIA agent in Central America. Isn't that crazy? As far as I know, he was in Florida on a business trip. He called me from Tampa last Friday.*

Greither's defining memory of his son was a Sunday afternoon on the high school baseball field, where he and his son threw liners, flies, Texas Leaguers, grounders, to each other. Dave had fired a liner just as his father took off in a new direction, putting his legs and reach at cross-purposes. The ball was going to pass behind him, no way to get his glove on it. Greither had stuck back his bare hand for the hell of it—and there was the ball, caught! He hadn't even looked. He tossed it to the boy, who had seen a miracle. No one had ever made a catch like that!

"Okay, let's pack it in," he had said, and when David had petitioned for *A couple more! One more!* he had refused. "Some other time. We should be getting home." He had not allowed another play to depreciate the moment in which his son had thought he must be one of the great ballplayers of all time.

David would be of little use to his mother. The boy had dropped out of Penn State to go west. His college cadre had been a money-making machine of M.B.A.s and Ph.D.s, and David had been uneducated, too soon married, headed nowhere in jobs that sounded like they hardly paid the rent. He had some kind of half-ass job doing pest control for a building renovator in Tucson. The son for whom Lowry Greither had produced a miracle was now married for the second time and had never brought his new wife east. Lowry and Nina met her once in Tucson on their way to a Rocky Mountains vacation.

A memory of another triumphant performance drifted into the bleak cell, the scene a restaurant. In Boston to examine the roof of a church, with a day to spare before his next appointment, he had driven a rented car to Provincetown to see what that notorious place was like and had lunched at Ivor's, a restaurant recommended by people who knew. Before the menu pages listing the specialties of the house was a page of Ivor's policies having to do with smoking, personal checks, credit cards, service for children . . . As to liquor, Ivor's waitpersons would serve no more than three drinks to a patron before dinner. Anybody who wanted more should speak to the manager.

Greither had decided to return to the same dining room for dinner, and before walking over from his room he emptied a plastic container he kept in his toiletries kit. It had come into the house with a powdered diet food that Nina had tried, and was a stiff thirty-ounce cylinder with a throat the full diameter and a flat, well-fitted cap—a shame to throw anything like that away. He had retrieved it from the wastebasket to use as a sleeve for his toothbrush holder, toothpaste, shampoo. He emptied and rinsed it, screwed on the top, tucked it into his trench-coat pocket, and walked up the street to the restaurant. At the table near the wood stove nobody would be seated at his right hand. He draped the coat over the back of his chair.

He ordered a martini and another. He ordered a third. He ordered a fourth.

One Friday morning, an 18-wheeler didn't see Darlene and Tom driving to work until it was too late. Their Saturn sedan was blindsided. It spun around and rolled, ending up in the highway median.

The hospital stay was short—under two hours. But still, being thrown against shoulder and lap belts at highway speed, no matter how safe your car is, hurts. For Tom, the old college lineman, the aches and pains felt kind of familiar. And he was back at work on Monday. For Darlene, who'd never played football, it took a little longer.

Everyone at work was glad to hear how the car held up in the crash. Many of them own Saturns, too. In fact, there's quite a high percentage of Saturn owners where the Robisons work.

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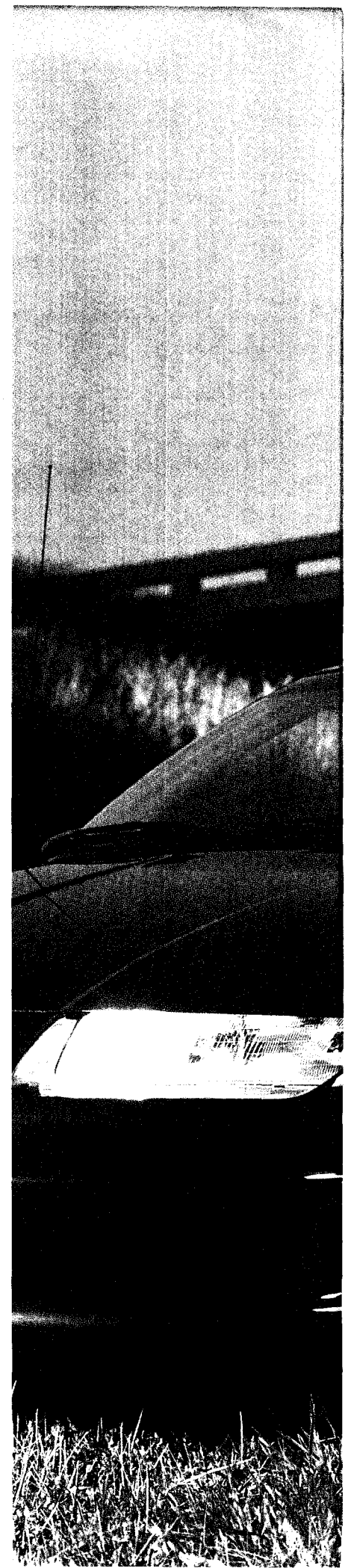
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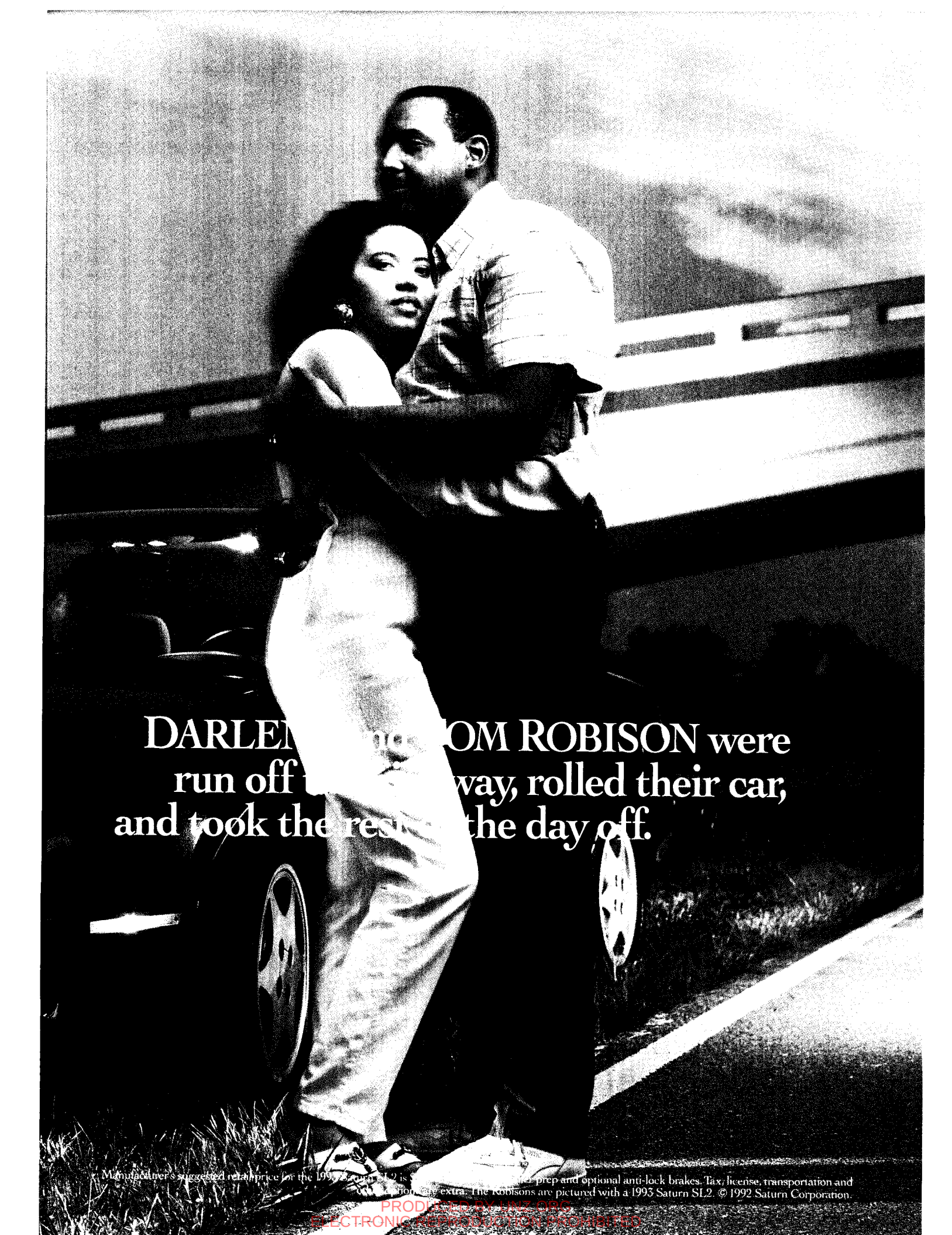
They happen to work for us, in Spring Hill. And, after ordering another Saturn, Tom let everyone know, recent events notwithstanding, that he liked his present job just fine, and had no plans to become a test driver.



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"We have a policy—" the waitperson said hesitantly, as if she had never before had to do that. She showed him the statement in the menu about three drinks. The manager would have to approve. The manager was the bartender. Approaching the bar, Greither held out both hands to show their steadiness and touched index fingers to his nose.

He asked good-naturedly, "Do you want me to walk a line? I know you have to be careful, and I appreciate it, but I'm as good as new. I'd like to stay on martinis through dinner."

"Are you driving?"

"Walking. I'm staying around the corner, at the Foremast Inn."

"You're a pretty goddamn good drinker," the bartender said to the customer who had had three martinis in twenty minutes. "I'll tell your waitperson."

He walked out having wangled eight—six in his pocket, the last a flourish with his dessert cake.

Why had he done it? Who was the joke on?

He hadn't done it as a joke. He had performed so that the waitperson would say *Would you believe it? Eight martinis, and it was like water.* So the bartender would think *Look at him. Not a big guy either.* He had done it so people he didn't know, people who meant nothing to him, people he would never see again, would say to each other *Eight martinis. Like water!* They would tell that story for years in the bars of country clubs and cruise ships, *a fellow who could handle liquor like nobody you ever saw.*

Was vanity genetic, as alcoholism was now said to be? Did his nature predispose him to put six martinis in his pocket, to pretend for his son, to seek unearned celebrity in this terrifying place where they battered a man as a warning to the CIA *norteamericano*?

ARK

Night and endless rain,
the house become an ark—
what have we saved?

An old spaniel, a clock
three generations late,
a packet of mixed seeds.

And O yes, memory
of two colts racing
at dawn, mine the black one.

—Leonard Nathan

He hailed the guard. "*Por favor.* Tell the major—the comandante, yes?—that the *norteamericano* wishes to speak to him."

FOR HIS SELF-RESPECT, GREITHER BEGAN WITH Deriba.

"That poor man Deriba believes I implicated him in some way. That is a terrible mistake. He is on my conscience."

"A good place for him." The major braced his hands on the edge of the desk, the cigar in his taut fingers aimed like a gun at the prisoner. "You think we are stupid? You think you can come here and tell Deriba and Olmo where the CIA hides weapons and we will not learn of it? You think we don't know about Rizase? Tell me, first, every name and where the guns are hidden. Then we talk. You have a family. You wish to go home."

Weapons! Rizase! Who—what—was Rizase? A person? A place? A thing? What a goddamn mess he had wandered into. He could only hold up his hands and shake his head, hoping to convey with what utter, unalloyed sincerity he rejected guns and Rizase.

"I don't know anything about weapons. I don't know a Rizase! Major! I am not CIA!"

The "affair" (as he had thought of it, in anticipation) had overshot the mark at an unforeseen speed and was careening on, God knows where, past his stop. He had to get off. He had been shrewd enough to arrange a way to leave before the "affair" got anywhere near as difficult as this, but everything had moved too fast. He had a ticket that showed his absolute right to get off. He presented it. "Hear me out, Major. Allow me a minute to tell you the full truth of the matter. It may sound strange."

"You do your part. I do mine."

"You will have to judge."

"Yes, yes."

"You read a letter to me that disclosed the time of my arrival on the airplane from Mexico City. It said I was CIA. Could I ask you to take it from your file?"

The comandante considered whether he was obliged to do this. He decided abruptly, snapped back the file cover, withdrew the letter that lay near the top, and squared it on the desk. The prisoner had another instruction for him. "If you feel along the left margin, in the middle of the page, there are two pinholes, an inch apart, one above the other."

The comandante considered again whether he was losing face by following a prisoner's instruction. "*Por favor,*" Greither urged. "My story is preposterous. The pinholes are my credibility."

The comandante decided abruptly to investigate further. He picked up the page and fingered the margin as if it were money. He held the page to the light. He did not agree that the pinholes were there. He did not disagree.



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Greither said, "I know the pinholes are there because I put them there. I sent you that letter. I denounced myself. If I hadn't sent the letter, I would be here as an ordinary visitor, not as a prisoner. Is that not so?"

"To the contrary, it is printed in your own country that you are CIA. We are said to be holding you for investigation. The CIA already has spoken its usual lies that it knows nothing about you. You are abandoned. You should consider that and stop playing games."

"Comandante, what is known in the U.S.A. is in a letter also with two pinholes in the margin. I sent that letter to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. I can recite the text to you. We can assume that the Pittsburgh newspaper made an inquiry to the Associated Press, which now asks the CIA and your government for enlightenment. The CIA says it knows nothing, which is the truth."

The major fluffed his beard, which Greither took as a sign that the argument was getting to him, but he commented with continued disbelief, "Truth, Señor Greither, is not a concept of serpents, dogs, the man in the moon, or the CIA. It may take many days, months—maybe forever—to read the mind of the CIA. Meanwhile, they hide machine guns here for criminals. That is the matter between you and me."

"Why would I denounce myself if I were CIA?"

"What is the answer? Why do you ask to see me? Do you wish to test my patience? You will find out."

In the conversation he had foreseen as taking place in civilized circumstances between a curious official and himself, he had not imagined that his pinholes, in the event that he had to fall back on them, would fail to be convincing. The comandante was demanding more. The comandante demanded the last coin in his pocket, a keepsake—counterfeit, perhaps—of no value except to himself. It would be a contemptible penny to them, but it was his treasure. He tried to offer it in an appealing way.

"Sir, if you will listen with human understanding. I am guilty of bad judgment only, nothing against your country."

Seeing the major bristle, he began again. "Sir, not everybody has such interesting and valuable work as yours. My company, where I have been for thirty years, has been bought by strangers who live in another city. They have somebody who does the same work I do. I will be disposed of in a month or two. I am nobody to them, a name that can be struck off a payroll. I am not at a good age to feel that I have earned no place in the world." He heard a slightly operatic cadence in his voice and approved it as appropriate to a dialogue in a Latin country. "I became despondent. I thought to give flavor to my life with a rumor that I am in the CIA. This is not easy for me to say, sir."

His disclosure progressed from nonsense to nonsense. "I concocted this plan, to denounce myself as a CIA spy and then enter your country and be expelled. I would acquire notoriety. People to whom I had meant very little would have a certain wary respect for me. That's the whole of it. That's why I am here."

Had his peers from work and church been sitting there, he might have chosen to die before admitting such idiotic vanity, as a savage might choose to die before giving a stranger magic power over him by telling his name. Now, having heard himself say it—who could believe it!

"That's all," the major commented.

"That's the whole truth."

"You come from the United States for the purpose of denouncing yourself so you will be expelled? Your reward is to have a shady reputation? You guarantee yourself with pinholes in letters? If I may borrow a word from you—it is perhaps too preposterous to be a lie."

"Yes."

"You are a lunatic."

Lunatics, certainly, were under protection in a country that pretended to be civilized.

The major returned the page to the folder, got up, and came around to Greither's side of the desk. Greither supposed he should stand also and was halfway up when the major struck him with the flat of his hand on the



cheek and then struck him again as the hand swung back.

Tasting the salt of tears and blood from his lip, bewildered and frightened, he shuffled along the cement-walled passage as the guards directed him.

THIS ROOM WAS WHITEWASH CLEAN, WITH ONLY one cot and a closet that closed with an oilcloth curtain. The light was no better than in the other, but it could be switched on and off with a string. Again, the only décor was a portrait of the youthful colonel supporting his hat. A clean pot, paper, a washbasin with a cold faucet, a cotton towel that rolled on a spindle, a table, and a chair.

In the early afternoon of the fourth day his son arrived, pushing a flop of brown hair back where it belonged, dropping his striped gym bag on the floor to free a hand for shaking. His face wore a broad look of inquiry.

"What the hell's going on, Dad? Are you okay?"

"David! Okay, fine, yes."

David saw the blistered lip and put his finger toward it in inquiry. "Nothing. Accident." Greither signaled *bugs*. What they said should be circumspect.

"We'll talk about that. Yeah. You're in the newspapers—you're famous. I've been in a hotel here for three days trying to get to you. Get packed. We're outta here. We fly at four-thirty."

"How did that happen?"

"Crank it up. The army jeep I came in is waiting. The comandante says to get you out of here. We don't need two invitations, do we?"

Had the comandante left the CIA legend intact? Had he told Dave about the pinholes? Had he ridiculed him to his son?

"You talked to the comandante? The major with the beard?"

"He talked to *me*. I was in his waiting room. He came out of his office and said, 'Take that man out of my country on the next plane. We have had enough of him here.' A lieutenant took over. He asked me if I had airplane money. Hell, yes—they wouldn't give me the visa to come in until I showed them Express checks for two thousand dollars. Let's go—walk and chew gum."

Greither tried to catch up with the take-charge manner of this young man who got on a plane in what he happened to be wearing: chinos, blue shirt, yellow socks, loafers. Two thousand dollars in his pocket, heading a rescue mission, telling his father to move it, move it. He had always been an uncertain quantity, a boy without ground to stand on, without a trade or profession, his only firm ambition a desire to be *out west*. Behind the scenes they seemed to have exchanged places, and the father had become the uncertain quantity.

"How is your mother taking this? Did you see her?"

"She's all right, but she's in a fog. I didn't see her. We talked. It made more sense to shoot down here from Tuc-

son without going east. The first I knew was when Mom called. A reporter from the *Post-Gazette* had been after her. They had a tip you were doing something for the CIA down here."

"What did she tell them?"

"She said that was crazy."

"That's your mother."

"She said you were in Florida inspecting roofs. I called your company office. They said the same thing. I called the CIA. They said they had had press inquiries but that they didn't know anything—you didn't belong to them. I wouldn't expect them to tell me if you did. I got back to the *Post-Gazette*. They seemed to be the source. They faxed me a copy of an anonymous letter. They had been bound to follow it up. After all, Dad, you *are* disappeared."

David was reaching for a denial or an affirmation that Greither did not want to give. He could tell a bug a story it already knew. "The bottom line is that I had a free weekend. I had been reading about this country. A newspaper story said they were promoting visits by Americans, and I had an impulse. I flew to Mexico City, where I knew I could get a visa, and then came here, where they socked me into this jail."

"No reason?"

"They thought I was CIA."

"You didn't tell *anybody* you were leaving the country?"

"I thought I would be in and out in a couple of days. I didn't want your mother to worry about my being in a place where a revolution was in progress."

The story was sufficiently unconvincing. The legend would be nourished by ambiguity.

"You didn't want her to *worry*? Okay. All set? Let's get this show on the road."

At the terminal the lieutenant went inside to order that the *norteamericanos* be boarded without a lot of queuing and paper-shuffling. The familiar flight attendant greeted him with her anxious, simpatico smile. He was recognized. "You see?" he said to her. "*No problema*."

They took their carry-ons to seats on the twin side. For the first time, they felt free to talk. Dave slapped his father on the knee.

"Our man from Pittsburgh. So what's going on?"

"Nothing's going on. I got here at the wrong time. They think the CIA stashed machine guns and bombs somewhere. They were sure I was an agent, here to pass the word to locals."

"And you're not. Right?"

"Now, David, why would you even entertain such a question?"

David unzipped his bag and took a newspaper clipping from an envelope. "I told you you were famous."

Over two columns was the report that Lowry F. Greither, an executive of GRM Inc., a resident of the Shady-side district of Pittsburgh, had been detained in a Central American country. He was said to be connected with the

Central Intelligence Agency. An agency spokesman denied that the CIA knew anything about Mr. Greither or the reason for his presence in a country to which travel by U.S. nationals was discouraged.

That it was a front-page story was impressive. A few inches on page eight was more like what he had had in mind. No amount of denying would ever quite kill a story like this. Years later people would say, "Greither. Isn't he CIA?"

"Why would they print anything as irresponsible as that? It could get a man killed."

David unfolded another page. "This is what got the newspaper on it. They faxed me."

Greither felt his face being watched while he read the letter he had sent to the *Post-Gazette* from Mexico City. He held it to the light casually. It was a good fax. The pinholes had printed as dots.

"I don't know what they're talking about. I can't imagine why anybody would send a letter like this. Some nut must be loose in Mexico City." He handed it back. "I don't know how to begin to deal with it. Let's forget it. How is your wife? Tell me about your business."

"Janice is fine. We just opened our fifth branch. One thing I didn't know about the West: You see those photos of geologic strata, like seven-layer cakes. They don't tell you that one of those layers is termites. The whole Southwest is underlaid with termites. You keep the oil. I'll take the termites."

Greither learned about the pest-control business while the airplane took off and climbed through overcast onto a surf of white clouds. The engines throttled down until the plane was cruising at a speed that seemed no more than that of a car looking for a parking space. The attendant came down the aisle on no particular mission. The *norteamericano* raised a finger for her attention.

"Por favor, señorita."

"Yes, sir."

"Is the crew all from Mexico?"

"Some. The *capitán* is Costa Rican. I live just near Ciudad Linares."

"Do you know the village Quetalorba?"

"A small place. Over the mountains."

"Do you know the village Ayotla?"

"Ayotla del Río. *Sí, señor*. I have never been there. You visit there?"

"No. I know people there I would like to send something to."

"You could send a letter maybe?"

"What was that all about?" David asked, when his father released the señorita to her other duties.

Greither told him of the prisoners and the responsibility that weighed on him. He was forming a plan. He would put traveler's checks and a letter in an envelope intended, eventually, for Deriba and Olmo and entrust them to the girl, whose face he had confidence in. He knew the names of their villages. He would give her, say,

fifty dollars for her trouble. If she couldn't do it, she could get somebody to do it.

"You want to send American traveler's checks into those villages?"

"It could be cash. We could get pesos in Mexico City."

"You would have to tell the girl everything. She would be a CIA courier as far as they're concerned."

"Of course I would tell her everything. She would go in with her eyes open."

"You think she would do that?"

"I don't know."

"You think you should ask her? She could go right to the police."

"No, I don't think she's the type."

"Lotsa luck."

Greither thought he had said enough. He heard himself sounding unprofessional. David would expect a CIA agent to go about his schemes in a more resourceful way.

After an hour in the air Greither decided against asking the girl to carry money and a message to the families of Deriba and Olmo. The mission was too dangerous. He had no right to enlist her in anything like that. And to send money—even to put a letter with a foreign stamp in the mail—to the family of a man already in custody as an enemy of the state would be mindless. Maybe in five years peace would be declared and he would make a trip. He could rent a car and show up in Quetalorba and ask for Juan Deriba, who had an orchard, who trimmed trees.

They dipped into the acrid air of Mexico City. He closed his briefcase and thought about what he was going back to. He might not have a job. On the other hand, the new owners might in some way be intimidated by this affair and delay a decision that had ramifications involving the government. Someone might have a job for him in Washington—one of those ambiguous jobs like "government relations."

They were disembarking. He said good-bye to the señorita who did not know of the adventure for which she had almost been enlisted. Walking from the end of the ramp, David touched his father's arm and said again, perhaps in amusement, perhaps to keep the question in play, "Our man from Pittsburgh. Wonderful."

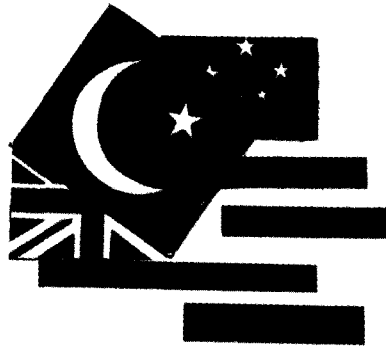
David would never quite know, nor would Greither's grandchildren, when they came, or Nina or anybody in the church. Only the CIA knew, and nobody believed them. Nobody else anywhere would know, but many would have heard something, and people who spread rumors didn't think of innocence as an option. He looked forward to being met by reporters and putting their questions aside.

"Preposterous. What do you expect me to say? I won't even dignify anything like that with a denial"—walking on, like any man too busy to deal with nonsense. All conditions—even despondency, even if he were rejected by his class—were endurable for a man sustained by such a legend. □

Is Islam by its very nature antithetical to the development of democratic institutions? A distinguished historian contemplates this difficult question, one whose answer is fraught with consequence for several troubled regions of the world

ISLAM AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

BY BERNARD LEWIS



THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DISCUSSION OF LATE, BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE the Islamic world, about those elements in the Islamic past and those factors in the Muslim present that are favorable and unfavorable to the development of liberal democracy. From a historical perspective it would seem that of all the non-Western civilizations in the world, Islam offers the best prospects for Western-style democracy. Historically, culturally, religiously, it is the

closest to the West, sharing much—though by no means all—of the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman heritage that helped to form our modern civilization. From a political perspective, however, Islam seems to offer the worst prospects for liberal democracy. Of the forty-six sovereign states that make up the international Islamic Conference, only one, the Turkish Republic, can be described as a democracy in Western terms, and even there the path to freedom has been beset by obstacles. Of the remainder, some have never tried democracy; others have tried it and failed; a few, more recently, have experimented with the idea of sharing, though not of relinquishing, power.

Can liberal democracy work in a society inspired by Islamic beliefs and principles and shaped by Islamic experience and tradition? It is of course for Muslims, primarily and perhaps exclusively, to interpret and reinterpret the pristine original message of their faith, and to decide how much to retain, and in what form, of the rich accumulated heritage of fourteen centuries of Islamic history and culture. Not all Muslims give the same answers to the question posed above, but much will depend on the answer that prevails.

The Prod of Weakness

ON DECEMBER 14, 1909, THE OTTOMAN SULTAN Mehmed V, in a speech from the throne delivered to the Ottoman parliament, spoke of the commitment of his administration to “constitutional and consultative government . . . the way of security and salvation prescribed by the noble *shari’a* and by both reason and tradition.” The content of the speech and the manner of its delivery reflected the new situation after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the suppression of the counterrevolutionary mutiny in the spring of 1909. Under the restored constitution the Ottoman Empire had become a constitutional monarchy, and the speech that the Sultan presented, British-style, to his parliament was written for him by his ministers, whose policies it expressed. The language used is interesting and revealing. “Constitution” is *meşrutiyyet*, a term coined in the nineteenth century to denote a new procedure; “consultation” is *meşveret*, an old term with many associations derived from both Ottoman political usage and Islamic political literature. The Islamic association implied by the use of this term is made explicit by the

citation of “the noble *shari’a*” and of “reason and tradition,” *akl ve-nakl*, a formula commonly used by Muslim theologians. The desire to borrow or imitate Western institutions perceived as useful, and to present them as somehow representing a return to authentic and original Islamic principles, is characteristic of most nineteenth-century and some twentieth-century Islamic reformers. The desire for such change arose in the main from a growing awareness of Western strength and wealth contrasted with Muslim weakness and poverty. The discovery or invention of Islamic antecedents was seen as necessary to make such political changes acceptable to the people of a proud and deeply conservative society with old and strong religio-political traditions of its own—these last including a profound contempt for the unbeliever and all his ways. It is not easy to accept instruction in matters as fundamental as the conduct of state from those one has long been accustomed to regard as benighted and unenlightened.

Muslim awareness of weakness and defeat first achieved significant expression in the early eighteenth century, following the disastrous failure of the second siege of Vienna (1683) and the Treaty of Karlowitz

Black Sea, the French in Egypt—made European superiority painfully obvious. This succession of military defeats was the more galling to the people of a religious society with a long history of political and military triumph, starting in the lifetime of its founder, and with a proud awareness of that sacred history.

In time there arose some among the reformers who argued that European military superiority derived from nonmilitary causes, and two in particular—one economic, the other political. Some identified the sources of Western power more specifically as industrialization and constitutional government. The Arab failures in the struggle against Israel, particularly in 1948 and in 1967, revived the great debate on what is wrong with Arab and, more broadly, Islamic society, and what can be done to put it right. Like the Turks after their failure to capture Vienna, so the Arabs after their failure to capture Jerusalem began by seeing this as a primarily military problem for which there was a military solution: bigger and better armies with bigger and better weapons. And when these bigger and better armies also failed, there was a growing willingness to listen to those who sought deeper causes and offered more-radical solutions.

For Islamic fundamentalists, democracy is obviously an irrelevance,

and they rarely use or even misuse the word. They are, however, willing to

demand and exploit the opportunities that a self-proclaimed

democratic system by its own logic is bound to offer them.

(1699), the first imposed by a victorious enemy on a defeated Ottoman government. There had been earlier defeats and setbacks—the final expulsion of the Moors from Spain, the ending of the Tatar yoke in Russia, the establishment of the Western European maritime powers in the Muslim lands of South and Southeast Asia. But all these were in a sense peripheral and seem to have had little impact on the heartlands of Islam and the Middle East, where the Ottoman Empire, the last and in many ways the greatest of the Muslim military empires, continued to perform its task as the sword and shield of Islam in the long struggle against Christendom. For a while the awareness of weakness was in the main limited to the Ottoman governing elite, the first to bear the brunt of the changed balance of forces, while the rest of the population was still protected from both invasion and reality by the armed might of the Ottoman state, even in its decline a formidable military power. The terms of the discussion were similarly limited to military matters, to weapons and training and military organization, since for some time it was in these alone that Muslims experienced the growing superiority of the West. The events of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—the Russians in the

Fundamentalists and Democrats

THERE ARE MANY WHO SEE NO NEED FOR ANY such change and would prefer to retain the existing systems, whether radical dictatorships or traditional autocracies, with perhaps some improvement in the latter. This preference for things as they are is obviously shared by those who rule under the present system and those who otherwise benefit, including foreign powers who are willing to accept and even support existing regimes as long as their own interests are safeguarded. But there are others who feel that the present systems are both evil and doomed and that new institutions must be devised and installed.

Proponents of radical change fall into two main groups—the Islamic fundamentalists and the democrats. Each group includes a wide range of sometimes contending ideologies.

The term “fundamentalism” derives from a series of Protestant tracts, *The Fundamentals*, published in the United States around 1910, and was used first in America and then in other predominantly Protestant countries to designate certain groups that diverge from the main-

stream churches in their rejection of liberal theology and biblical criticism and their insistence on the literal divinity and inerrancy of the biblical text. The use of the term to designate Muslim movements is therefore at best a loose analogy and can be very misleading. Reformist theology has at times in the past been an issue among Muslims; it is not now, and it is very far from the primary concerns of those who are called Muslim fundamentalists.

Those concerns are less with scripture and theology than with society, law, and government. As the Muslim fundamentalists see it, the community of Islam has been led into error by foreign infidels and Muslim apostates, the latter being the more dangerous and destructive. Under their guidance or constraint Muslims abandoned the laws and principles of their faith and instead adopted secular—that is to say, pagan—laws and values. All the foreign ideologies—liberalism, socialism, even nationalism—that set Muslim against Muslim are evil, and the Muslim world is now suffering the inevitable consequences of forsaking the God-given law and way of life that were vouchsafed to it. The answer is the old Muslim obligation of jihad: to wage holy war first at home, against the pseudo-Muslim apostates who rule, and then, having ousted them and re-Islamized society, to resume the greater role of Islam in the world. The return to roots, to authenticity, will always be attractive. It will be doubly appealing to those who daily suffer the consequences of the failed foreign innovations that were foisted on them.

For Islamic fundamentalists, democracy is obviously an irrelevance, and unlike the communist totalitarians, they rarely use or even misuse the word. They are, however, willing to demand and exploit the opportunities that a self-proclaimed democratic system by its own logic is bound to offer them. At the same time, they make no secret of their contempt for democratic political procedures and their intention to govern by Islamic rules if they gain power. Their attitude toward democratic elections has been summed up as “one man, one vote, once.” This is not entirely accurate, at least not for the Iranians. The Islamic Republic of Iran holds contested elections and allows more freedom of debate and criticism in the press and in its parliament than is usual in most Muslim countries, but there are exacting and strictly enforced limitations on who may be a candidate, what groups may be formed, and what ideas may be expressed. It goes without saying that no questioning of the basic principles of the Islamic revolution or the republic is permitted.

THOSE WHO PLEAD OR FIGHT FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORM in the Arab and other Islamic lands claim to represent a more effective, more authentic democracy than that of their failed predecessors, not restricted or distorted by some intrusive adjective, not nullified by *a priori* religious or ideological imperatives, not misappropriated by regional or sectarian or other sectional interests. In part their movement is an extension to the

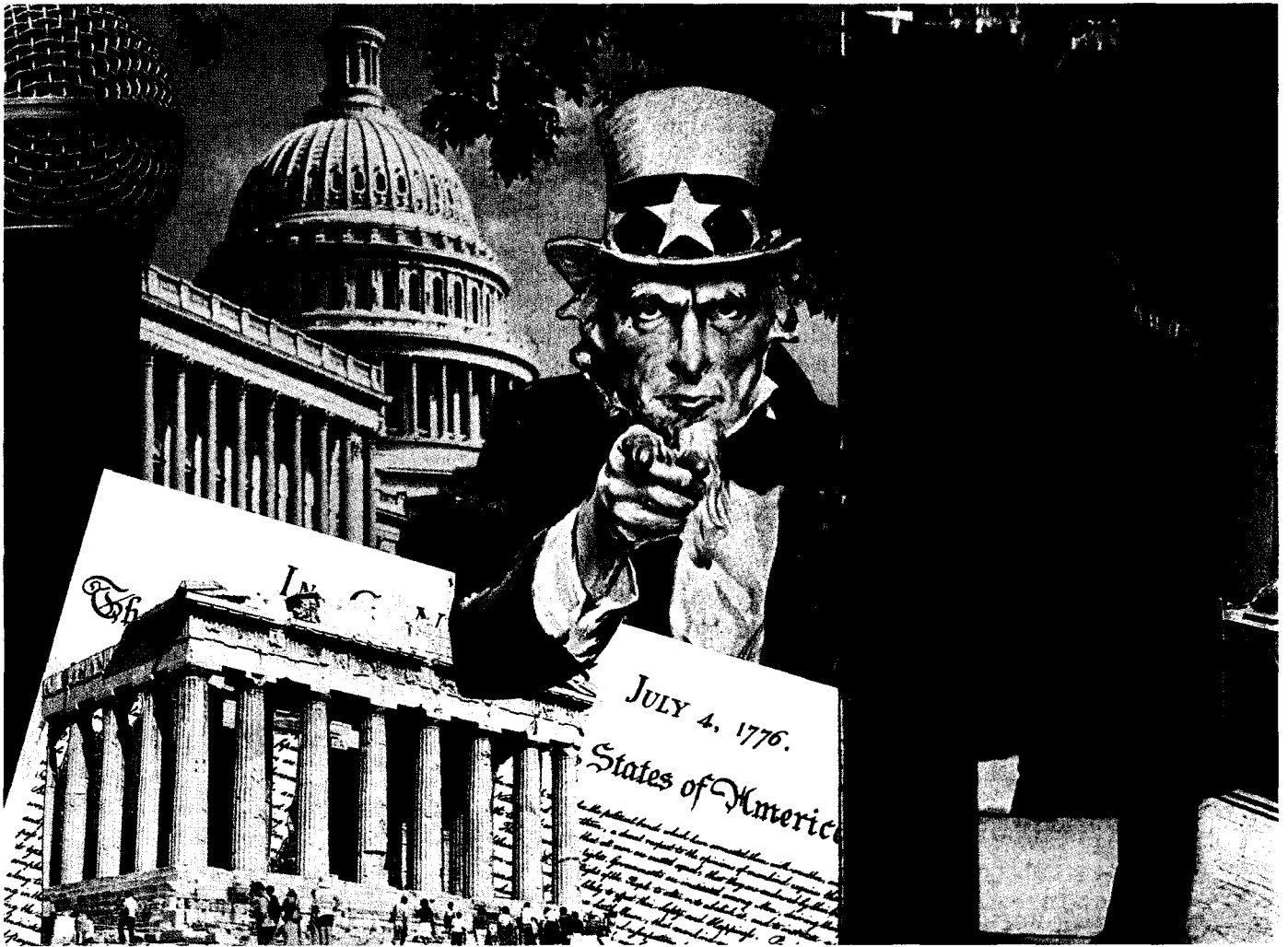
Middle East of the wave of democratic change that has already transformed the governments of many countries in Southern Europe and Latin America; in part it is a response to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the new affirmation of democratic superiority through victory in the Cold War. To no small extent it is also a consequence of the growing impact of the U.S. democracy and of American popular culture in the Islamic lands.

For some time America was seen merely as an extension of Western Europe—part of the same civilization, speaking the same language as the greatest of the empires, professing the same religion, damned by the same fatal flaws. Closer acquaintance revealed profound differences between American and Western European democracy, giving the former an attraction that the latter never possessed.

There is, of course, the obvious difference that the United States has never exercised imperial authority over Arab lands. A consequence of this is the less obvious but in the long run vastly more important difference that Americans in general—albeit with some well-known exceptions—have not developed the imperial attitude that colored, and to some extent still colors, human relations between Britons and Frenchmen on the one hand and the peoples of their former possessions on the other. This has made possible for Americans the kind of informal, equal, person-to-person relationships with Middle Easterners that were, and to some extent still are, rarely possible for Europeans.

American popular culture and mores have penetrated far more deeply and widely in Middle Eastern society than was ever possible for the elitist cultures of Britain and France. This kind of relationship is further encouraged by westward migration. There are now millions of Britons of South Asian, and Frenchmen of North African, origin. But it will probably be a long time before they achieve the level of integration and acceptance already achieved by new Americans from the Middle East. These have already become an important part of the American political process; they may yet find a role in the political processes of their countries of origin.

It is precisely the catholicity, the assimilative power and attraction, of American culture that make it an object of fear and hatred among the self-proclaimed custodians of pristine, authentic Islam. For such as they, it is a far more deadly threat than any of its predecessors to the old values that they hold dear and to the power and influence those values give them. In the last chapter of the Koran, which ranks with the first among the best known and most frequently cited, the believer is urged to seek refuge with God “from the mischief of the insidious Whisperer who whispers in people’s hearts. . . .” Satan in the Koran is the adversary, the deceiver, above all the inciter and tempter who seeks to entice mankind away from the true faith. It is surely in this sense that the Ayatollah Khomeini called America the great Satan: Satan as enemy, but—more especially and certainly more plausibly for his people—also as source of enticement and temptation.



IN THESE TIMES OF DISCONTENT AND DISAPPOINTMENT, of anger and frustration, the older appeals of nationalism and socialism and national socialism—the gifts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe—have lost much of their power. Today only the democrats and the Islamic fundamentalists appeal to something more than personal or sectional loyalties. Both have achieved some limited success, partly by infiltrating the existing regimes, more often by frightening them into making some preemptive concessions. Successes have in the main been limited to the more traditional authoritarian regimes, which have made some symbolic gestures toward the democrats or the fundamentalists or both. Even the radical dictatorships, while admitting no compromise with liberal democracy, have in times of stress tried to appease and even to use Islamic sentiment.

There is an agonizing question at the heart of the present debate about democracy in the Islamic world: Is liberal democracy basically compatible with Islam, or is some measure of respect for law, some tolerance of criticism, the most that can be expected from autocratic governments? The democratic world contains many different forms of government—republics and monarchies,

presidential and parliamentary regimes, secular states and established churches, and a wide range of electoral systems—but all of them share certain basic assumptions and practices that mark the distinction between democratic and undemocratic governments. Is it possible for the Islamic peoples to evolve a form of government that will be compatible with their own historical, cultural, and religious traditions and yet will bring individual freedom and human rights to the governed as these terms are understood in the free societies of the West?

No one, least of all the Islamic fundamentalists themselves, will dispute that their creed and political program are not compatible with liberal democracy. But Islamic fundamentalism is just one stream among many. In the fourteen centuries that have passed since the mission of the Prophet, there have been several such movements—fanatical, intolerant, aggressive, and violent. Led by charismatic religious figures from outside the establishment, they have usually begun by denouncing the perversion of the faith and the corruption of society by the false and evil Muslim rulers and leaders of their time. Sometimes these movements have been halted and suppressed by the ruling establishment. At other times they



have gained power and used it to wage holy war, first at home, against those whom they saw as backsliders and apostates, and then abroad against the other enemies of the true faith. In time these regimes have been either ousted or, if they have survived, transformed—usually in a fairly short period—into something not noticeably better, and in some ways rather worse, than the old establishments that they had overthrown. Something of this kind is already visibly happening in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The question, therefore, is not whether liberal democracy is compatible with Islamic fundamentalism—clearly it is not—but whether it is compatible with Islam itself. Liberal democracy, however far it may have traveled, however much it may have been transformed, is in its origins a product of the West—shaped by a thousand years of European history, and beyond that by Europe's double heritage: Judeo-Christian religion and ethics; Greco-Roman statecraft and law. No such system has originated in any other cultural tradition; it remains to be seen whether such a system, transplanted and adapted in another culture, can long survive.

Leaving aside the polemical and apologetic arguments

—that Islam, not Western liberalism, is the true democracy, or that Western liberalism itself derives from Islamic roots—the debate about Islam and liberal democracy has focused on a few major points.

God's Polity

EVERY CIVILIZATION FORMULATES ITS OWN IDEA of good government, and creates institutions through which it endeavors to put that idea into effect. Since classical antiquity these institutions in the West have usually included some form of council or assembly, through which qualified members of the polity participate in the formation, conduct, and, on occasion, replacement of the government. The polity may be variously defined; so, too, may be the qualifications that entitle a member of the polity to participate in its governance. Sometimes, as in the ancient Greek city, the participation of citizens may be direct. More often qualified participants will, by some agreed-upon and recurring procedure, choose some from among their own numbers to represent them. These assemblies are of many different kinds, with differently defined electorates

and functions, often with some role in the making of decisions, the enactment of laws, and the levying of taxes.

The effective functioning of such bodies was made possible by the principle embodied in Roman law, and in systems derived from it, of the legal person—that is to say, a corporate entity that for legal purposes is treated as an individual, able to own, buy, or sell property, enter into contracts and obligations, and appear as either plaintiff or defendant in both civil and criminal proceedings. There are signs that such bodies existed in pre-Islamic Arabia. They disappeared with the advent of Islam, and from the time of the Prophet until the first introduction of Western institutions in the Islamic world there was no equivalent among the Muslim peoples of the Athenian boule, the Roman Senate, or the Jewish Sanhedrin, of the Icelandic Althing or the Anglo-Saxon witenagemot, or of any of the innumerable parliaments, councils, synods, diets, chambers, and assemblies of every kind that flourished all over Christendom.

One obstacle to the emergence of such bodies was the absence of any legal recognition of corporate persons. There were some limited moves in the direction of recognition. Islamic commercial law recognizes various forms of partnership for limited business purposes. A *waqf*, a pious foundation, once settled is independent of its settlor, and can in theory continue indefinitely, with the right to own, acquire, and alienate property. But these never developed beyond their original purposes, and at no point reached anything resembling the governmental, ecclesiastical, and private corporate entities of the West.

Thus almost all aspects of Muslim government have an intensely personal character. In principle, at least, there is no state, but only a ruler; no court, but only a judge. There is not even a *city* with defined powers, limits, and functions, but only an assemblage of neighborhoods, mostly defined by family, tribal, ethnic, or religious criteria, and governed by officials, usually military, appointed by the sovereign. Even the famous Ottoman imperial di-

WILL WORK FOR FOOD

for Robert Penn Warren

1

He was off the road on the island, the
handmade sign held up for recognition,
his hard face starved around his commitment
to hard work or a handout, staring straight
as a prophet, the slow summer traffic
gliding to the corner, looking, gliding,
as if he were part of an accident,
the lost parent, unnatural, or part
of another thing, a richer flowering,
and we were the poor in spirit passing.

2

Job saying, Thou my God are cruel and cast
me down to be lifted up like driftwood
on a wave, like ash above the burning
of my body, where my bones are starlight
in the cold night air, a night cloud drifting. . . .
Do I not grieve the poor on either side,
on the right and the left, did I not grieve?
I know thou will bring me into the house
to let me mourn, let me stand up ignored,
letting me cry in the congregation.

3

The flowering at the end of the long stem
of the tension, the way the mallow rose
seems nervous in its stasis, taller than
a man, common, pale, mucilaginous,
the kind of study we will wade out to
just to touch and then be disappointed
in its color, texture, odor, this wild-
flower of the destitute who cut up
flowers for flavor and want for everything
except spirit, solitude, and famine.

4

Job saying, I am driven forth by thieves
who dwell in cliffs, in caves, among the rocks
and nettles where they gather in mock prayer
to mock me as their byword and their song,
who mar my path and set my calumny,
who come upon me as a wide breaking
rolling in of waters, wind and terrors,
a desolation and my soul poured out,
so even garments of my body change,
brother to dragons, companion to owls.

—Stanley Plumly

Making Believe About The World Population Crisis

World population, now 5.5 billion, is growing by about 90 million every year, and is projected to reach 12-14 billion in the next century. Nevertheless...

We keep on **MAKING BELIEVE** that a world population of that size (or even our present size) would be sustainable for the long term.

We keep on **MAKING BELIEVE** that our already overstressed ecosystem could provide an adequate standard of living for such numbers.

We keep on **MAKING BELIEVE** that family planning alone, or education, or economic development, or all of these together, are capable of halting world population growth before it reaches catastrophic levels.

But ... if we keep on **MAKING BELIEVE**, and keep on **pretending** that these preposterous propositions are true, we are going to wind up where we are now headed: in a world of 14 billion impoverished people. Such a world would be a place where none of us would care to live, a world of almost universal poverty, with an ecosystem in ruins.

Negative Population Growth, Inc. (NPG) believes that the optimum size for world population is not more than two billion, and that a substantially larger population would simply not be sustainable indefinitely. (World population was two billion about 60 years ago.)

In our view, only if world population is reduced to that size can we hope to create a world economy that would be sustainable indefinitely, with an adequate standard of living for all, in a healthy environment. So many people profess to believe otherwise because they do not see how world population could possibly be reduced to an optimum size.

The conventional wisdom sees no way that world population can be halted short of 12-14 billion, and accepts that growth as inevitable. Rather than face up to the grim reality that such massive growth would bring on an economic and ecological catastrophe, conventional thinkers prefer to **MAKE BELIEVE** that all will be well.

But the truth is that sustainable development for a world of 12-14 billion people, is simply an **impossible dream**.

Toward An Optimum World Population

Further population growth on the gigantic scale now projected is **not inevitable**. If we could only summon the will, we could start **now** on the path toward a sustainable world population of not more than two billion.

To reduce world population size, we need a negative rate of population growth. For that, we need a below replacement level of fertility, which a considerable number of developed countries have already achieved.

If almost no parent on earth had more than two children the world's total fertility rate (average number of children per woman) would fall well below the replacement level (roughly 2.1). That is because many women choose voluntarily to have no children at all, or only one child.

A below replacement fertility rate will be tremendously difficult to achieve in the developing countries, where 90 percent of future population growth is projected to occur, and where couples typically want from three to six children. In 1992 the average fertility rate in these countries was 3.8.

In developing countries, there must be programs of real population control geared to family limitation (no more than two children) rather than to family planning alone. Family planning must be supplemented by non-coercive incentives to encourage the two-child **maximum** family.

In 1992 the world's total fertility rate was 3.3. According to the most recent United Nations projections, if present fertility and mortality rates continue, world population would grow to 109 billion in 2100 and 694 billion in 2150!!

By contrast, with a below replacement level fertility of 1.7, or about half the 1992 level, the United Nations projects that world population would peak at 7.8 billion in 2050, but then fall to 4.3 billion 100 years later. If we could only follow that path, the world would be well on its way to an optimum population of not more than two billion.

How We Can Help

The United States now devotes only about two percent of its foreign aid budget to international population programs. NPG advocates that we spend at least 50 percent of that budget, or about \$8 billion a year, to help finance programs of real population control in Third World nations.

Furthermore, we should encourage Third World countries to recognize that a replacement level fertility rate is a totally inadequate goal. That is because, even after replacement fertility is reached in those countries, the momentum of past growth would still cause their populations to almost double.

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van—the *divan-i humayun*—described by many Western visitors as a council, could more accurately be described as a meeting, on fixed days during the week, of high political, administrative, judicial, financial, and military officers, presided over in earlier times by the Sultan, in later times by the Grand Vizier. Matters brought before the meeting were referred to the relevant member of the *divan*, who might make a recommendation. The final responsibility and decision lay with the Sultan or the Grand Vizier.

One of the major functions of such bodies in the West, increasingly through the centuries, was legislation. According to Muslim doctrine, there was no legislative function in the Islamic state, and therefore no need for legislative institutions. The Islamic state was in principle a theocracy—not in the Western sense of a state ruled by the Church and the clergy, since neither existed in the Islamic world, but in the more literal sense of a polity ruled by God. For believing Muslims, legitimate authority comes from God alone, and the ruler derives his power not from the people, nor yet from his ancestors, but from God and the holy law. In practice, and in defiance of these beliefs, dynastic succession became the norm, but it was never given the sanction of the holy law. Rulers made rules, but these were considered, theoretically, as elaborations or interpretations of the only valid law—that of God, promulgated by revelation. In principle the state was God's state, ruling over God's people; the law was God's law; the army was God's army; and the enemy, of course, was God's enemy.

Without legislative or any other kind of corporate bodies, there was no need for any principle of representation or any procedure for choosing representatives. There was no occasion for collective decision, and no need therefore for any procedure for achieving and expressing it, other than consensus. Such central issues of Western political development as the conduct of elections and the definition and extension of the franchise therefore had no place in Islamic political evolution.

Not surprisingly, in view of these differences, the history of the Islamic states is one of almost unrelieved autocracy. The Muslim subject owed obedience to a legitimate Muslim ruler as a religious duty. That is to say, disobedience was a sin as well as a crime.

Modernization in the nineteenth century, and still more in the twentieth, far from reducing this autocracy, substantially increased it. On the one hand, modern technology, communications, and weaponry greatly reinforced the rulers' powers of surveillance, indoctrination, and repression. On the other hand, social and economic modernization enfeebled or abrogated the religious constraints and intermediate powers that had in various ways limited earlier autocracies. No Arab Caliph or Turkish Sultan of the past could ever have achieved the arbitrary and pervasive power wielded by even the pettiest of present-day dictators.

Money and Power

THE IMPEDIMENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF liberal institutions were not merely political. The small-scale autocracy of the home, especially the upper-class home, founded on polygamy, concubinage, and slavery, was preparation for an adult life of domination and acquiescence, and a barrier to the entry of liberal ideas. Women—particularly the mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of rulers—have played a much more important role in Muslim history than is usually conceded by historians. But they were until very recently precluded from contributing to the development of their society in the way that a succession of remarkable women have contributed to the flowering of the West.

The economic basis of Western-style liberal democracy was early recognized in the West. British, American, and French democrats alike insisted on the right to property as one of the basic human rights that safeguard and are safeguarded by free institutions. It also forms an essential component of civil society as conceived by European thinkers. For some time the rise of socialist ideas, parties, and governments weakened the belief in private property as a liberal value. Recent events have done much to restore that belief.

Islamic law unequivocally recognizes the sanctity of private property, but Islamic history reveals a somewhat different picture, in which even a rich man's enjoyment of his property has never been safe from seizure or sequestration by the state. This chronic insecurity is symbolized in the architecture of the traditional Muslim city, in which neighborhoods, and even the houses of the wealthy, are turned inward, surrounded by high blank walls. Marx and Engels themselves recognized that their canonical sequence of ruling classes defined by production relationships might not apply to non-Western societies. They sketched the theory of what they called "the Asiatic mode of production," in which there was no effective private ownership of land, and consequently no class war—just a simple opposition between the terrorized mass of the population and the all-encompassing state power, bureaucratic and military.

Like many of their other insights, this is a caricature, not a portrait, but also like their other insights, it is not without some basis in reality. Comparing the relationship between property and power in the modern American and classical Middle Eastern systems, one might put the difference this way: in America one uses money to buy power, while in the Middle East one uses power to acquire money. That is obviously an oversimplification, and there are significant exceptions on both sides. The misuse of public office for financial gain is not unknown in the United States; the use of money to buy into the political process is not unfamiliar in the traditional Middle East. But these are marginal, in the main small-scale, de-

partures from the norm. In the vast American political and economic system the money made through the actual exercise of power is relatively unimportant—no more than small-time speculation. In the Middle East money can buy only the power of intrigue, not of command.

Perhaps the most striking manifestation of this difference between the two systems is in the merchant class, and its place in the society and polity. Muslim societies, both medieval and early modern, often included a rich and varied industrial and commercial life, and evolved a wealthy and cultivated merchant class. But with brief and insignificant exceptions—as, for example, in a disputed borderland between rival states, or in an interregnum between the collapse of one regime and the consolidation of another—they were never able to match the achievement of the rising European bourgeoisie in the creation of the modern West. One reason is that a large proportion of them were non-Muslims, principally Christians and Jews, and therefore precluded from any decisive role in the political process. But far more important was the chronic, permanent insecurity, the sequence of upheavals and invasions, the ever-present threat of expropriation or destruction.

reaches Western levels, irreversible changes have already taken place. These changes are indispensable: a society can hardly aspire realistically to create and operate free institutions as long as it keeps half its members in a state of permanent subordination and the other half see themselves as domestic autocrats. Economic and social development has also brought new economic and social elements of profound importance—a literate middle class, commercial, managerial, and professional, that is very different from the military, bureaucratic, and religious elites that between them dominated the old order. These new groups are creating their own associations and organizations, and modifying the law to accommodate them. They are an indispensable component of civil society—previously lacking, yet essential to any kind of democratic polity.

There are also older elements in the Islamic tradition, older factors in Middle Eastern history, that are not hostile to democracy and that, in favorable circumstances, could even help in its development. Of special importance among these is the classical Islamic concept of supreme sovereignty—elective, contractual, in a sense even consensual and revocable. The Islamic caliphate, as prescribed and regulated by the holy law, may be an au-

Liberal democracy, however far it may have traveled, is in its origins

a product of the West. No such system has originated in any other cultural

tradition; it remains to be seen whether such a system, transplanted

and adapted in another culture, can long survive.

THESE TRADITIONAL OBSTACLES TO DEMOCRACY have in many ways been reinforced by the processes of modernization, and by recent developments in the region. As already observed, the power of the state to dominate and terrorize the people has been vastly increased by modern methods. The philosophy of authoritarian rule has been sharpened and strengthened by imported totalitarian ideologies, which have served a double purpose—to sanctify rulers and leaders and to fanaticize their subjects and followers. The so-called Islamic fundamentalists are no exception in this respect.

Self-criticism in the West—a procedure until recently rarely practiced and little understood in the Middle East—provided useful ammunition. This use of the West against itself is particularly striking among the fundamentalists. Western democracy for them is part of the hated West, and that hatred is central to the ideas by which they define themselves, as in the past the free world defined itself first against Nazism and then against communism.

The changes wrought by modernization are by no means entirely negative. Some, indeed, are extremely positive. One such improvement is the emancipation of women. Though this still has a long way to go before it

ocracy; it is in no sense a despotism. According to Sunni doctrine, the Caliph was to be elected by those qualified to make a choice. The electorate was never defined, nor was any procedure of election ever devised or operated, but the elective principle remains central to Sunni religious jurisprudence, and that is not unimportant.

Again according to Sunni doctrine, the relationship between the Caliph and his subjects is contractual. The word *bay'a*, denoting the ceremony at the inauguration of a new Caliph, is sometimes translated as “homage” or “allegiance.” Such translations, though no doubt reflecting the facts, do not accurately represent the principle. The word comes from an Arabic root meaning “to barter,” hence “to buy and to sell,” and originally referring to the clapping or slapping of hands with which in ancient Arabia a deal was normally concluded. The *bay'a* was thus conceived as a contract by which the subjects undertook to obey and the Caliph in return undertook to perform certain duties specified by the jurists. If a Caliph failed in those duties—and Islamic history shows that this was by no means a purely theoretical point—he could, subject to certain conditions, be removed from office.

This doctrine marks one of the essential differences

between Islamic and other autocracies. An Islamic ruler is not above the law. He is subject to it, no less than the humblest of his servants. If he commands something that is contrary to the law, the duty of obedience lapses, and is replaced not by the right but by the duty of disobedience.

Muslim spokesmen, particularly those who sought to find Islamic roots for Western practices, made much of the Islamic principle of consultation, according to which a ruler should not make arbitrary decisions by himself but should act only after consulting with suitably qualified advisers. This principle rests on two somewhat enigmatic passages in the Koran and on a number of treatises, mainly by ulama and statesmen, urging consultation with ulama or with statesmen. This principle has never been institutionalized, nor even formulated in the treatises of the holy law, though naturally rulers have from time to time consulted with their senior officials, more particularly in Ottoman times.

Of far greater importance was the acceptance of pluralism in Islamic law and practice. Almost from the beginning the Islamic world has shown an astonishing diversity. Extending over three continents, it embraced a wide variety of races, creeds, and cultures, which lived side by side in reasonable if intermittent harmony. Sectarian strife and religious persecution are not unknown in Islamic history, but they are rare and atypical, and never reached the level of intensity of the great religious wars and persecutions in Christendom.

Traditional Islam has no doctrine of human rights, the very notion of which might seem an impiety. Only God has rights—human beings have duties. But in practice the duty owed by one human being to another—more specifically, by a ruler to his subjects—may amount to what Westerners would call a right, particularly when the discharge of this duty is a requirement of holy law.

Two Temptations

IT MAY BE—AND HAS BEEN—ARGUED THAT THESE legal and religious principles have scant effect. The doctrine of elective and contractual sovereignty has been tacitly ignored since the days of the early caliphate. The supremacy of the law has been flouted. Tolerance of pluralism and diversity has dwindled or disappeared in an age of heightened religious, ethnic, and social tensions. Consultation, as far as it ever existed, is restricted to the ruler and his inner circle, while personal dignity has been degraded by tyrants who feel that they must torture and humiliate, not just kill, their opponents.

And yet, despite all these difficulties and obstacles, the democratic ideal is steadily gaining force in the region, and increasing numbers of Arabs have come to the conclusion that it is the best, perhaps the only, hope for the solution of their economic, social, and political problems.

What can we in the democratic world do to encourage the development of democracy in the Islamic Middle East—and what should we do to avoid impeding or sub-

verting it? There are two temptations to which Western governments have all too often succumbed, with damaging results. They might be called the temptation of the right and the temptation of the left. The temptation of the right is to accept, and even to embrace, the most odious of dictatorships as long as they are acquiescent in our own requirements, and as long as their policies seem to accord with the protection of our own national interests. The spectacle of the great democracies of the West in comfortable association with tyrants and dictators can only discourage and demoralize the democratic opposition in these countries.

The more insidious temptation, that of the left, is to press Muslim regimes for concessions on human rights and related matters. Since ruthless dictatorships are impervious to such pressures, and are indeed rarely subjected to them, the brunt of such well-intentioned intervention falls on the more moderate autocracies, which are often in the process of reforming themselves in a manner and at a pace determined by their own conditions and needs. The pressure for premature democratization can fatally weaken such regimes and lead to their overthrow, not by democratic opposition but by other forces that then proceed to establish a more ferocious and determined dictatorship.

All in all, considering the difficulties that Middle Eastern countries have inherited and the problems that they confront, the prospects for Middle Eastern democracy are not good. But they are better than they have ever been before. Most of these countries face grave economic problems. If they fail to cope with these problems, then the existing regimes, both dictatorial and authoritarian, are likely to be overthrown and replaced, probably by one variety or another of Islamic fundamentalists. It has been remarked in more than one country that the fundamentalists are popular because they are out of power and cannot be held responsible for the present troubles. If they acquired power, and with it responsibility, they would soon lose that popularity. But this would not matter to them, since once in power they would not need popularity to stay there, and would continue to govern—some with and some without oil revenues to mitigate the economic consequences of their methods. In time even the fundamentalist regimes, despite their ruthless hold on power, would be either transformed or overthrown, but by then they would have done immense, perhaps irreversible, damage to the cause of freedom.

But their victory is by no means inevitable. There is always the possibility that democrats may form governments, or governments learn democracy. The increasing desire for freedom, and the better understanding of what it means, are hopeful signs. Now that the Cold War has ended and the Middle East is no longer a battlefield for rival power blocs, the peoples of the Middle East will have the chance—if they can take it—to make their own decisions and find their own solutions. No one else will have the ability or even the desire to do it for them. Today—for the first time in centuries—the choice is their own. □

EXITS

BY GUY BILLOUT





Creature Comforts

Kachemak Bay neatly condenses the attractions of the largest state

by Barbara Wallraff

ALASKANS PUT up with a lot to live where they do—winter days only a few hours long, Olympic-pool-sized snowdrifts in the parking lot, the threat of bear attacks (no joke). The payoff is the unearthly scenery, profuse and mostly appealing wildlife, freedom from crowds, and expansive frontier atmosphere. The visitor has the happy prerogative of collecting the payoff without enduring the trials. And, as I discovered on a trip last summer, the joys of Alaska are all the sweeter for knowing that the trials exist and one is escaping them. In the glimmering ten o'clock twilight of late summer the three o'clock nightfall of winter is almost palpable, and it gives an exhilarating edge to the view.

Midwinter may seem an odd time to bring up Alaska, but most people who travel there—whether they go on their own or join a cruise or package tour—begin planning their trip at least half a year in advance. The hard part of the planning might be fitting into one trip everything you're tempted to see and do: Denali (Mount McKinley), in whose glacier-streaked environs I went flightseeing with a grizzled pilot straight out of *Sky King*, who kept looping around to give his passengers a closer view of the moose and bear browsing below; the Inside Passage, where on my trip the weather was bad and I could

barely see, let alone enjoy, the majestic fjords; the capital, Juneau, where I cheered up, discovering the first-rate Native-arts store Objects of Bright Pride and gawking at suburban streams packed with spawning salmon; Glacier Bay, where I took a ride on a little boat that was quickly surrounded by whales and dolphins, with seabirds wheeling overhead; the reconstructed frontier towns of Gold Rush country; one of the state's bald-eagle sanctuaries; the midnight sun.

More likely the hard part is coming to terms with being unable to fit everything in. Alaska presents logistical problems. For example, incredibly, Juneau cannot be reached by road—water and glaciers hem it in on all sides. And then there is Alaska's sheer size. Indeed, the state contains a glacier (one of at least 5,000) that is bigger than Rhode Island. Alaska itself is more than twice as large as Texas, and a fifth as large as all the Lower Forty-eight together—statistics whose meaning begins to be clear when you discover that it will take you the better part of a day to fly from southerly Juneau to Barrow, in the far north.

You can't, therefore, easily or cheaply work your way down a checklist of the state's major attractions. And even if you could, you'd miss much of the feel of the state. I rushed around, by ship and boat and plane and bus and car and

floatplane, to visit as many of Alaska's attractions, see as much of its wildlife, and experience as many of its out-of-the-way inns and eating places as possible. I don't recommend this. A much better idea is to see a few of the sights for which Alaska is justly famous and then spend three days to a week off the beaten path, enjoying Alaska where many Alaskans do—at Kachemak Bay.

KACHEMAK BAY belongs on more visitors' itineraries because it's easy to reach, magnificent to look at, and agreeably diverse, with ocean and mountains and culture and all sorts of places to stay and to eat. Its hub is the town of Homer, from Anchorage either an hour by air or a scenic five-to-six-hour drive past the impressive Portage Glacier and on down the west coast of the Kenai Peninsula, a recreation area especially popular with Alaskans.

Lonely Planet's excellent guidebook *Alaska* calls Homer a "charming, colourful fishing village" set in an "incredible panorama of mountains, white peaks, glaciers, and the beautiful Kachemak Bay"; Alaska's *Official State Guide and Vacation Planner* (call 907-465-2010 for free copies of this and other relevant publications) refers to it, unsentimentally, as an "art community and fish processing center." Both descriptions are apt. In addition to being the home port



At left: the tasteful rusticity of Kachemak Bay Wilderness Lodge; above: a skerry off Gull Island, on the way to Halibut Cove

of a number of commercial fishing boats (and innumerable pleasure boats), Homer hosts an annual Spring Arts Festival. It is where Tom Bodett, Alaska's answer to Garrison Keillor, broadcasts from, and it has a half dozen galleries showing crafts and art—unusual for a town whose year-round population is less than 4,000. Homer has accommodations ranging from campsites to hotels, a spectrum of restaurants, and numerous businesses that will take visitors hiking, fishing, birding, kayaking, and flightseeing. (These tourism-related concerns, and also ones in nearby communities, are listed in the Homer Tourist and Recreation Guide, available free from the Homer Chamber of Commerce; call 907-235-7740.)

Probably the town's most unusual feature is Homer Spit, a naturally

formed strip of land that extends some five miles into the bay. Along its shores is an entertainment district that will remind you of every boardwalk and pier you've ever been on. The marina is here too. Late in the day, after the charter boats have come in, tourists stand on the dock with the big halibuts they've caught, having snapshots taken as their fish are weighed. Hundred-pounders are not uncommon. The charter-boat captains carry guns to subdue large fish (by shooting them between the eyes), for these can be dangerous if they thrash around on board.

The passenger ferry *Danny J* leaves from the spit too, bound for the tiny community of Halibut Cove—a lovely place to spend an afternoon and evening. The noon ferry makes a brief detour past Gull Island, a mound of

rock every inch of which is covered, like an insanely popular avian resort, with nesting birds—some 18,000 glaucous-winged gulls and kittiwakes, murre and guillemots, cormorants and puffins. The noon ferry conveniently arrives after “quiet time,” from noon to one each day, when a person who is, say, sitting out on the water in a rowboat talking with a friend will be politely asked to hush up or go inside for the duration.

The idea seems only natural in the peaceful setting. Although Halibut Cove is situated on little Ismailof Island, the idea of “cove” is truer to the experience of the place than that of “island,” for virtually all vistas lie across the water. Everyone gets around in skiffs or on the boardwalks that line the cove partway around; there are no cars.

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There are, however, three art galleries to poke around in (one devoted to the work of resident Diana Tillion, known for her work in the medium of octopus ink), a few hiking trails, an enclosure of llamas, and The Saltry, a fine restaurant. In what passes for frontier America today—including rural Alaska—the first fashionable thing to arrive tends to be good food.

Today, when the height of fashion involves fresh, locally grown or caught ingredients, frontier communities even have the edge on cities. This fact impressed itself on me throughout my trip, at country inns and remote fishing lodges. At The Saltry, as a member of a cooperative party of seven, I tasted most of what was on the menu that night. Nearly everything except the desserts was based on fresh seafood: salmon pâté, halibut ceviche, black-sablefish chowder, Thai-spiced scallops, and rockfish Veracruz-style, to name some of the memorable dishes.

Halibut Cove has a few places to stay overnight (they're listed in the Homer guide); reservations are almost certainly needed, and you'll want ferry and restaurant reservations as well. Or you can have an early dinner and catch the last ferry back to Homer at nine.

THOUGH REMOTE, Halibut Cove is hardly wild. Sojourning in Kachemak Bay's wilderness can be fun too. You can camp, or you can stay in comfort and even style, provided you're willing to pay the price. I stayed at Tutka Bay Lodge, an ambitious work in progress situated on an arm off Kachemak Bay and accessible by boat, floatplane, or helicopter. The main lodge and dining room, four guest cabins, a sauna, and the helipad have been completed; more cabins are on the drawing board. For the minimum stay of two nights, rates including all meals are \$400 to \$600 per person.

The highlight was an afternoon's sea-kayaking expedition. The destination that my group's guide had in mind, it turned out, was a bald eagles' nest full of half-fledged eaglets. When we were nearly there, a seal joined us, popping up repeatedly among the three kayaks and swimming alongside us for a half hour or so. No sooner had we left the seal behind than we began spotting sea otters, floating on their backs and cracking open shellfish with their teeth.

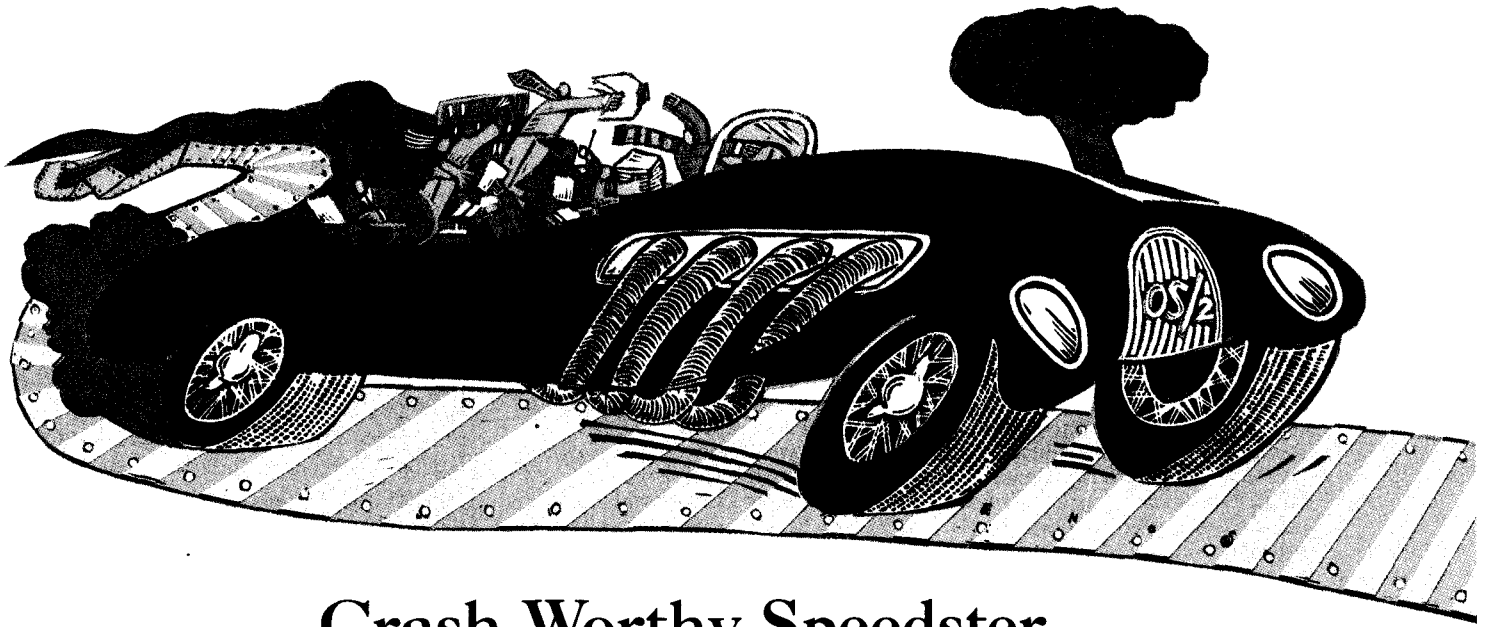
More finished—and all but perfect in

its tasteful rusticity, it seemed to me on a brief lunchtime visit and tour—is Kachemak Bay Wilderness Lodge, on Chikna Poot Bay, another, especially choice arm off Kachemak. The complex here, which includes a main lodge, five guest cabins, a solarium, and a sauna and outdoor hot tub, is a twenty-year labor of love by Michael and Diane McBride, whose attention to detail struck me as flawless. Having completed one of the cabins a few years ago, they realized that it would command a better view of the bay if it were sixteen feet farther back—so they had it moved.

In urban America inns sometimes boast that their rooms are "individually decorated," the point being that more care was taken than if someone had ordered up identical bedroom sets out of a catalogue. In other parts of rural Alaska I visited, the idea of "individually decorated" sometimes seemed like a joke: one cabin I stayed in was decorated with empty clear-glass bottles—Canada Dry and Jim Beam labels and all—on the windowsills and on the exposed crossbeams. I could find no fault with the Kachemak Bay's cabins, though. They managed to be handsome and luxurious and at the same time perfectly in tune with the frontier.

The McBrides serve as wilderness guides as well as hosts, showing guests—whether they fancy themselves fishermen, photographers, or amateur archaeologists—the spots they seem most likely to enjoy. The rate here, alas, is \$1,950 per person for a minimum stay of five days. Five days is in effect the maximum, too, for the lodge is open only Monday through Friday.

IF ALL OF the above sounds hopelessly tame, call Biological Journeys (800-548-7555 or from outside the United States 707-839-0178), and get the brochure on their natural-history cruises aboard the large-yacht-sized *Delphinus*. I joined one of their groups, briefly, for a landing at the Pack Creek Bear Sanctuary, where we watched grizzly bears, and was impressed by their programs, which seemed challenging but not physically arduous. Also call Alaska Discovery (907-586-1911) for information about their still more active, sometimes rigorous trips into the wild. If even that doesn't seem adventurous enough—well, the annual Iditarod sled-dog race will be starting in just a few weeks. □



Crash-Worthy Speedster

The unheralded IBM OS/2 2.0 is as versatile and fast as Windows pretends to be

by James Fallows

THE FIRST IBM personal computer appeared twelve years ago. Until about five years ago, if you wanted to use any IBM-compatible personal computer you had to deal with the infamous "disk operating system," or DOS. This software gave Bill Gates his first step toward tycoonhood, after he persuaded IBM that his fledgling company, Microsoft, should supply it for all IBM personal computers. Today there are some 100 million IBM-compatible personal computers (henceforth, PCs) in use around the world, and the great majority of them are running Microsoft's DOS.

DOS had one obvious virtue: it provided a standard that got the industry going. It also has enormous drawbacks. Bill Gates is said to have found the A:> command system natural and inviting, but few other people do. Macintosh users can give their files long and informative names; DOS requires the likes of "CONTRACT.TXT." DOS was designed at a time when computers were slow and random-access memory—the memory the computer uses to execute programs—cost a thousand times as much per byte as it does today. DOS therefore

displays a Depression-baby mentality about conserving memory. It cannot deal with more than 640 kilobytes of random-access memory. The first IBM PCs came with only 16K of RAM, expandable all the way to 64K, so DOS's 640K limit did not initially seem to be a constraint. But soon memory prices were falling, and the potential power of computers far outstripped what DOS could use. For programmers, a more troublesome barrier is the 64K limit on "segment size." Under DOS, no section of a program or unit of data can take up more than 64K of memory. This may sound like a lot of room, but for complicated programs it isn't, and DOS programming has turned into a form of haiku.

Also, DOS is relentlessly single-minded. It puts all of the computer's resources—processor, screen, memory, disk drive, printer—at the disposal of whatever program is running at the time. This, too, seemed logical before anyone thought of having personal computers perform several tasks at once, but it has turned into yet another serious liability. By the mid-1980s the most popular processing chips were

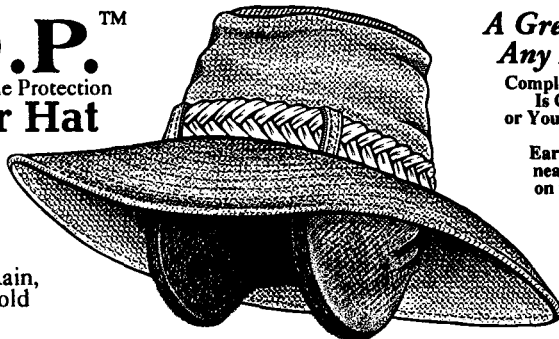
theoretically capable of letting PCs run many programs at once. DOS's design was all that stood in the way.

In the mid-1980s alternatives to DOS began popping up. The Macintosh, from Apple, emerged as the main alternative to the PC stream. (Although the Macintosh itself is obviously a personal computer, the term "PC" has come to mean IBM and IBM-compatible machines, including those made by Compaq, Dell, AST, and other manufacturers. The personal-computer world is therefore divided into the Mac and PC realms.) The Macintosh presented itself as everything DOS was not: easy to learn, visually appealing, free of arcane instructions. The NeXT computer, created by Apple's co-founder, Steven Jobs, is a more recent variation on the Macintosh approach. Each computer is more elegant and polished than its PC equivalent, but also tends to be more expensive per unit of computing power. Mainly because of the cost difference, PCs have remained more popular.

The hardware available for PCs improved at an amazing rate throughout the 1980s. Processing chips became much faster; memory became much

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cheaper. But these very improvements made DOS's constraints more obvious and painful. It was as if some village in England or Germany that had based its road system on cow paths from the medieval days suddenly had to cope with an affluent population driving vans and sports cars.

Most software writers concluded that it was not possible simply to junk DOS, any more than it would be possible now to junk the English language because of its weird spellings. Too many popular applications, from Lotus 1-2-3 to WordPerfect, were written with DOS's peculiarities in mind. So palliatives emerged.

One approach involved tweaking the computer system in a way that tricked DOS into forgetting its constraints. Starting in the mid-1980s, PC users became familiar with "extended memory," "expanded memory," "LOADHI" commands, "terminate and stay resident" programs, and other such devices. In one way or another they enable DOS to use more memory than it was intended to, and to handle several tasks at the same time. DESQview and similar programs allow a user to run more than one program at a time—for instance, printing from a word processor while also using a spreadsheet. "Task-switchers," like Software Carousel and Back&Forth, do the same thing in a more limited way. To return to the medieval-village analogy, all this programming and tweaking is like shaving inches off car bodies, slightly widening streets, and eventually building a second deck above the existing roadway to handle more traffic.

The other main approach was Windows, the "graphic environment" introduced by Microsoft in the late 1980s. On the surface this looked like a step in the Macintosh direction. Programs are represented on the screen by little "icons," or pictures, and you select commands with a mouse, just as Macintosh users do. But the resemblance is only cosmetic. Macintosh was conceived from the beginning as a graphically based system. If, for example, you slide a disk into a drive, the Macintosh will immediately create a disk-shaped icon on your screen. Windows can't operate this way, because it is just a layer of graphics on top of the same old DOS. File names are still limited and memory is still constrained. Demand for Windows was stagnant until 1990, when a faster, better-looking, and more capable

version, called Windows 3.0, was released. Microsoft claims that it sells an average of a million copies a month. A significant fraction of these are "bundled" sales, in which Windows comes pre-installed on new computers. A new, still more capable version, Windows 3.1, was released last year and has been included in machines sold since then. The Federal Trade Commission has been investigating whether Microsoft's bundling agreements with computer companies, along with other practices, give Microsoft unfair, monopolistic advantages. Nonetheless, Windows is clearly a market leader.

THERE WAS, all along, another alternative to DOS. It has received much less attention than either Windows or the tweaking programs but it is, to my mind, clearly the most successful approach. This is OS/2, a fundamentally new operating system that was initially a joint effort by IBM and Microsoft and now is IBM's alone.

Nearly everything that is wrong with DOS is wrong because of the processing chips that existed when it was designed—the Intel 8088 and 8086 used in the original PCs. DOS was scaled down to their limits; OS/2 was scaled up to the possibilities of the Intel 80386, which was unveiled in 1985 and became widespread in 1988.

The first version of OS/2 came out in 1987 but was widely considered a flop. Its very ambition was part of its problem. A computer needs only 640K of memory to run DOS at the limits of its potential. OS/2 requires at least 4 megabytes (4,000K) of memory, more than six times as much—and at just the moment it appeared, political and commercial feuds between the United States and Japan created a "memory shortage" that pushed RAM prices sky-high. The first version of OS/2 also faced an important "so what?" obstacle. It would concurrently run word-processing and spreadsheet programs that had been written for OS/2, but practically none of these existed. Most of the programs that did exist had been written for DOS, and OS/2 would run only one of these at a time—like DOS itself. OS/2 ran its DOS program in something called the compatibility box. Its performance was such that it was soon known as the penalty box.

OS/2 suffers from a further handicap, which has become more important as

time has gone on. The computer business, like the car business, runs on fashion as much as on technical specifications. Fashion in the car business boils down to sex and speed. In the computer business it boils down to—well, sex and speed, but of a different sort.

For a decade nimble companies have been outwitting slow corporate establishments. As long as IBM and Microsoft were collaborating on OS/2, some of Microsoft's stylish, successful image rubbed off on IBM. In 1991 they went their separate ways, positioning Windows and OS/2 as rivals rather than complementary products. With that split IBM lost most of its sheen in the personal-computer world. It became just another big, bumbling middle-aged bureaucracy. Bill Gates had mocked the IBM culture even when the two companies were theoretically partners. IBM programmers had traditionally been evaluated on how many lines of program code they produced per day—a "sixteen tons" mentality applied where it didn't belong. Gates said that his programmers were rewarded in just the opposite way—for being able to write a program with fewer lines of code. According to *Gates*, an impressive new biography by Stephen Manes and Paul Andrews, Gates said that IBM's approach to OS/2 was like "trying to build the world's heaviest airplane."

The computer press still reflects a snickering attitude toward IBM and its efforts, and a presumption that Microsoft will come up with smarter, sexier solutions. This slant is most obvious in the fat and influential Ziff-Davis publications (*PC Magazine*, *PC Computing*, and so on), which in the past two years have become essentially Microsoft Windows fan magazines. When new seventeen-inch monitors came out last year, *PC Magazine's* cover announced "A Bigger View of Windows!" This is as if an audiophile magazine announced the release of new CD players by saying "Clearer Tones From Billy Ray Cyrus!" Last fall *PC Magazine* published an across-the-board "comparison" of Windows and OS/2 that meticulously omitted the areas of OS/2's strength. For instance, it brought out the electronic timers to see how quickly each system could multi-task several programs—but it confined this test to multi-tasking of Windows programs. If the multi-tasking test had more closely resembled the real computer world, by

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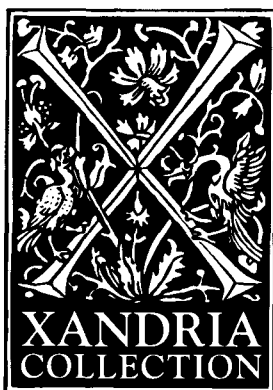
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including several DOS programs, Windows would have limped far behind. (Weirdly, a few weeks after publishing this slanted comparison *PC Magazine* awarded OS/2 its "Technical Excellence" award for 1992.)

A MAJOR DEPARTURE from the previous versions, OS/2 2.0 went on sale last spring. Perhaps this program is fatter than it ought to be (the installation program takes up twenty-four floppy disks), and perhaps IBM is not as flashy as Microsoft. Still, the release of OS/2 2.0 has to be the biggest step forward in personal computing in the past two or three years. Even though the name and image of this software may seem off-putting to the average user, for people who give it a serious try OS/2 can make computing much simpler and more natural. Windows has been presented as a Macintosh-like tool for Everyman and OS/2 as the nerd's delight, but from what I've seen OS/2 can do more for more users than Windows can.

OS/2 2.0 is different from DOS or Windows in more ways than I can describe here, but its most important features are, in techno-speak, "flat" memory, multi-threading, and pre-emptive multi-tasking. The first means that the computer can use the memory as one big block, without worrying about 64K segments or 640K limits. The second and third mean that OS/2 2.0 can, deftly and reliably, do what DOS and Windows can do only shakily and under duress: handle several tasks at once. In addition, OS/2 has a file system that lets you give files long, informative names, and it can store and read information on hard disks much faster than DOS. OS/2 also has an optional graphic environment that incorporates some very handy Macintosh-like features.

Under DOS there are fundamental limits to how many chores a computer can perform simultaneously—even with a system, like DESQview or Windows, that is designed for multi-tasking. DOS processes are single-threaded. If one program is stuck doing something very slow, like waiting for information from a floppy disk, no other program can step in to use the idle processor time. DESQview, Windows, or any other DOS-based task-switcher allocates processing time to DOS programs according to a strict rotation—so many ticks of the clock for one pro-

gram, so many for the next, and the next, and eventually back to the first. OS/2 2.0 eliminates both of these drawbacks. Its multi-threaded approach means that whenever one process is stalled or waiting, another can be given processor time, and its pre-emptive multi-tasking makes sure that the most urgent task is at the front of the processor queue.

What all this means, in practice, is a natural, reliable way to put your computer's memory and processor to maximum use. The new release of OS/2, unlike earlier ones, can run virtually any DOS program, and can run many of them at the same time. (In general, DOS programs run faster under OS/2 than under the original DOS, because of the way OS/2 handles disk and memory use.) It can also run nearly all Windows programs with its own built-in version of Windows, and can do so at the same time it is running DOS programs. Of course, it also runs the small assortment of programs written specifically for OS/2. Because it is designed for multi-tasking rather than jury-rigged, it runs all these programs with virtually none of the crashes or memory collisions that are so familiar to anyone who has tried to juggle programs under DOS or Windows. When two programs compete for the same memory space under DESQview or Windows, you end up having to reboot the computer and losing all the work you had in progress. When this happens under OS/2, the system can shut down only the program that is causing trouble, letting all the rest run undisturbed.

The crash-worthiness of OS/2 is one of its great advantages over any competitor. The other is an unusual kind of speed. People who trade up to faster computers—a 386 from a 286, a 50-megahertz from a 25-megahertz—are often disappointed to find how little visible difference the change makes. Word processors and communications programs run just a little faster than they did before. The reason is that for most machines, the hardware is not the limiting factor: DOS and Windows are. By removing that limit OS/2 restores some of the "gee whiz" to computing. As I type, an OS/2 program called Fax-Works is sending a fax from my computer, a Windows program called Word-Scan is converting a fax I received into normal text, a DOS program called Magellan is searching my hard disk for a

Obviously, you don't need OS/2 to keep doing anything your current system already does. But if you have a computer that will run OS/2, there's no good reason not to switch to it. The OS/2 software is not expensive for what it does. The list price is \$149, but IBM offers a variety of discounts and trade-ins offers that effectively take the price below \$100. (It also offers a sixty-day money-back guarantee.) If you now use DOS programs exclusively, OS/2 will run most of them faster. It can even make some DOS programs more stable, by avoiding oddities in DOS's use of memory. If you feel you should switch to Windows to stay in the mainstream of updated programs, you should consider running them under OS/2. Some programs may operate slightly more slowly than they do under Windows itself, but they are stabler and more pre-

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dictable under OS/2. Strange as it may sound, OS/2 can run a larger variety of Windows programs than any single version of Windows can. The latest release of Windows, 3.1, cannot handle some programs written for Windows 1.0 and 2.0; OS/2 can. A few programs written specifically for Windows 3.1 will not, as of this writing, work on OS/2. IBM says that a version of OS/2 able to accommodate them should be available soon.

The main reason not to switch to OS/2 is equipment. To operate it efficiently, you need a 386- or 486-based computer. You should have at least eight megabytes of memory, and your hard disk should hold 60 megabytes of information at the very least. The cheapest machines that meet these standards now cost about \$1,800. If you already have a 386-based computer, you can get extra memory for about \$40 per megabyte. (One kilobyte—one thousandth as much memory—cost more than that when I bought a Stone Age computer in 1978.) Hard-disk drives now cost \$2 to \$3 per megabyte of storage, or one hundredth as much as they did ten years ago. A good 200-megabyte drive, for instance, costs about \$425.

If you don't already have a sufficiently powerful computer, I can't say that it's worth trading up just to use OS/2. But the 386 chip is now the standard, and whenever you buy another computer, it should be powerful enough to handle OS/2. OS/2 is very easy to operate once you get it installed, though getting everything set up properly can be daunting. The documents that come with the software are ridiculously inadequate. (IBM has provided encyclopedic help files as *part of* the OS/2 program—that is, you have to get the system up and running before you can use it to read its own instructions. This is the only bonehead feature I have found.) The best book about OS/2 I have seen so far is *Inside OS/2 2.0*, by Mark Minasi (New Riders Publishing). You should read it or something similar, or call a friend who already uses OS/2, before you begin.

The surest indication of this software's value is that it soon becomes uninteresting. It is so obviously useful that you stop thinking about it at all. I never give a thought to my word-processing program, simply because I rely on it so much. Now that I've finished this article, I won't need to think about OS/2 anymore. □

Answers to the January Puzzler

C	O	H	O	S	T	E	S	S	S	C	A	M
A	R	O	U	S	E	D	P	A	W	A	R	E
R	L	C	T	E	S	T	A	M	E	N	T	S
D	E	A	L	E	T	R	I	O	S	A	Y	S
C	A	L	A	D	D	I	N	A	A	D	U	A
A	N	E	W	B	E	G	I	N	N	I	N	G
S	S	D	R	I	P	H	R	A	S	E	D	E
T	R	O	Y	B	E	T	A	X	K	N	E	W
I	E	N	G	L	A	N	D	E	R	S	R	R
L	A	I	N	E	C	F	O	L	I	A	G	E
E	R	A	S	S	E	N	S	A	T	I	O	N

"SOMETHING DIFFERENT"

Ten diagram entries could have a "new" beginning, signaling an anagram of the original answer (e.g., NEW DEAL = LEAD). Across. 1. COHOSTESS (anag.) 7. SCAM (rev.) 11. A-RO(USE)D 13. A-WAR-E 15. ST-ATE MEN-T 16. LEAD (double def.) 17. T-RIO 19. S(t)AYS 21. A-LAD-DIN 25. PHRASED (anag.) 27. TRO(Y) 29. BET-A 31. K(NEW) 33. GR(EEN-)LAND (L + nee rev.) 34. L(A)INE 35. FO(LI)AGE (Gila anag.) 36. S-EAR 37. E(SY)TONIANS Down. 1. CAR-D 2. LOANERS (homophone) 3. OUTL-AWRY (lout anag.) 4. TES-(v)T (rev.) 5. P(IS)AN 6. S-A-MOAN 8. CAN-A(DIE)NS 9. (p)ARTY 10. MESS-AGE 12. SEED (pun) 14. LA-O(DI)CEAN 18. GIRT-H (trig rev.) 19. SANSKRIT (anag.) 20. ELASTIC (hidden) 22. UND-ERGO 24. BIBLES (hidden) 25. PE-ACE 26. AXE-L 28. REAR (double def.) 30. ADOS (rev.) 32. W(R)-E-N

Books

Crossing the Color Line

by Nicholas Lemann

CROSSINGS: A White Man's Journey Into Black America
by Walt Harrington.
HarperCollins, \$25.00.

IT HAS BEEN thirty years since John Howard Griffin published *Black Like Me*, a harrowing description of his travels through the segregated South. The African-American world that Griffin described was dominated by poverty and oppression:

whites as a group . . . contrive to arrange life so that it destroys the Negro's sense of personal value, degrades his human dignity, deadens the fibers of his being.

Existence becomes a grinding effort, guided by belly-hunger and the almost desperate need to divert awareness from the squalors to the pleasures. . . .

Walt Harrington's contemporary version of black America is almost unrecognizably different. Most of the people he encounters are reasonably well off—living in nowhere

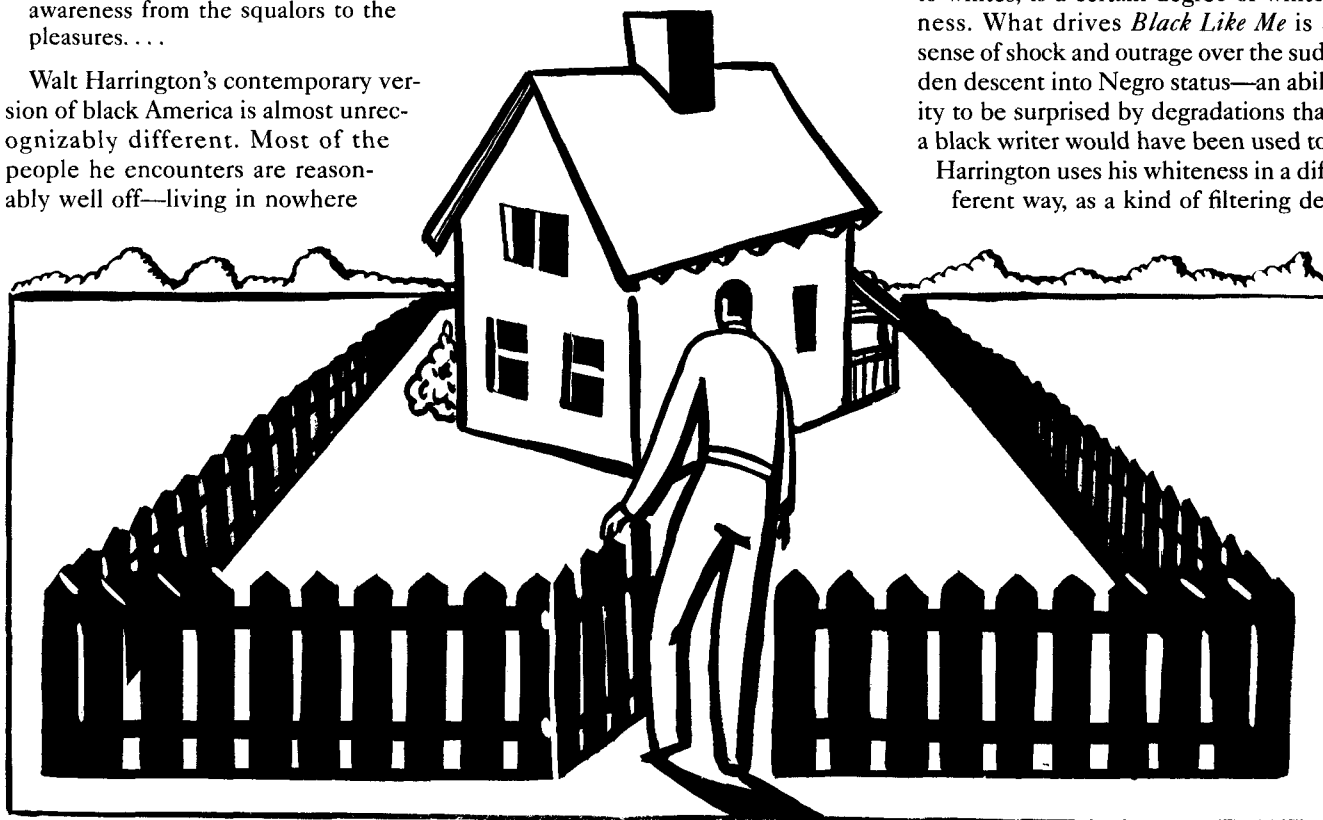
near the kind of material privation that was standard in *Black Like Me*. Usually they answer yes to Harrington's persistent questions about whether they have ever personally experienced racism, but it would have been absurd for Griffin even to ask. Still, it's noteworthy that both authors felt that the color line in this country is so pronounced that it would be impossible for them, as whites, truly to understand black life. Griffin underwent a series of dermatological treatments to have his skin dyed brown. Harrington became black "by proxy," as he puts it, by marrying a black woman and having two children who, by one of the immutable customs of American race relations, bear the racial designation of the minority parent. Being the father of black children made him sensitive to a whole range of racial issues that as a white man he had missed.

One day in the dentist's chair Harrington heard the kind of casual racist joke that most whites barely notice and found himself, to his surprise, enraged:

"This idiot's talking about my children!" The incident made him realize how little he really knew about the whole subject of race, and he decided to embark on an ambitious cross-country trip to learn as much as he could about black life. It's in the nature of the mission that the resulting book is episodic: it's made up of sixty-four set pieces, each built around a visit to a particular place. As a technique, this has one substantial disadvantage, which is that there is no narrative drive through the book; but it has advantages, too. Harrington is able to cover more ground, and work in a wider range of observations, than would have been possible in a book structured around a single location, family, or story. He can let people talk, even if they contradict one another. Each chapter is well crafted, and what emerges from the whole is not one great theory but a lot of interesting material.

If some partial claim to blackness is a great help to a writer seeking to convey a sense of black America, then so, in terms of ability to get the findings across to whites, is a certain degree of whiteness. What drives *Black Like Me* is a sense of shock and outrage over the sudden descent into Negro status—an ability to be surprised by degradations that a black writer would have been used to.

Harrington uses his whiteness in a different way, as a kind of filtering de-



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vice: he knows what questions whites want to ask blacks, and how whites will react to black opinions. To use the most basic example, it's just assumed in black America that racial prejudice is part of the everyday experience of most African-Americans—but to sell this idea to a white audience is tough, and requires a sure instinct for the unstated racial assumptions of whites.

As the book went on, I thought I detected Harrington becoming "blacker," in the sense of growing more inclined simply to accept items that are part of black conventional wisdom but throw whites off (for example, he passes along one interviewee's assertion that "the Egyptians were black," and, in describing a musically inclined black child's discovery that his local symphony was all white, writes, "He'd been excluded as surely as if Bull Connor had shown him the door")—and therefore less effective as a salesman of the black side of the story to whites. Nonetheless, Harrington's own brand of double consciousness—the ability to see things from the black and white points of view simultaneously—makes *Crossings* work.

THE MOST recent edition of the U.S. Census Bureau's booklet *The Black Population in the United States* tells through numbers what has become a familiar story: since civil-rights days black America has divided. Black married couples continue to gain ground economically, and are now up to 85 percent of the median family income for whites. But in 1991, for the first time, the proportion of black families headed by married couples dropped below half. Only one third of black children (as compared with four fifths of white children) live with both parents. Black "female householder" families—46 percent of the total—are stuck economically: their real incomes are the same today as they were in 1967. Because welfare benefits have not kept pace with inflation, the incomes of black families with no employed adult have dropped significantly during the same period. About a third of all blacks, and 44 percent of black children, are poor—roughly triple the white proportions.

Crossings, which Harrington says he intended "to be less like a social scientist's analysis and more like an artist's collage," doesn't reflect these statistics. By numbers, and also by emotional weight, it's dominated by people who



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are doing well. Some of them are celebrities and intellectuals (Spike Lee, Ishmael Reed), some are successful entrepreneurs and professionals, and some are people of "plain decency," with close, warm families, high community standing, and pleasant homes. It appears that Harrington had some difficulty getting inside the worse-off part of black America. He refers once to some appointments with poor people which fell through. When he does go into a ghetto, it's often with a social-service professional of some kind acting as intermediary and main character. His lone one-on-one interview with a woman on welfare doesn't use her full name, and she seems atypical anyway, having once attended college.

This lacuna isn't crippling, though. In fact, it works to Harrington's advantage, because the power of *Crossings* comes substantially from the healthiness, the impressiveness, of his black America. It is true that the press is now full of determinedly positive depictions of blacks; but many of these have a posed feeling, and they are counterweighed by the enormous volume of material about drug busts, drive-by shootings, gangs, AIDS, homelessness, and so on. What Harrington has done is produce a portrait of the black middle class that feels honest and devoid of flackery but is so different from what we're used to reading about blacks that it seems almost subversive. It's the black middle class as it sees itself, which is something whites would have difficulty finding elsewhere in print (except, perhaps, in the pages of *Ebony*).

All sorts of themes that are almost a daily part of black middle-class dinner-table conversation but are usually discussed only within the race appear in *Crossings*, and Harrington has the ability to bring them to the fore without ever resorting to the kind of clinical, judgmental tone fear of which kept them hidden from whites in the first place. Among these private subjects are preoccupation with skin color and with hair; the anger that black women feel at black men for so often being either feckless or, if not, drawn to white women; intramural jealousy, especially jealousy of successful blacks; the deep longing for the absent father many black men feel; and conspiracy theories. Harrington records a good deal of the anti-welfare, anti-crime sentiment that is common in the black middle class, with-

out falling prey to the oversimplification that these views are identical to white conservatism. Not always avoiding a sentimental tone, he takes on the difficult task of trying to delineate the approving black view of what black culture is: warm, intuitive, resourceful, pious, musical. He even absorbs a good deal of the black stereotype of whites, as an undifferentiated mass of privileged, prejudiced people who are "stiff and formal, cold and uncaring," "corny," "discreet, unflamboyant, emotionless," and obsessed with making money.

Also, by virtue of his being white, Harrington notices a lot of white hostility to blacks that is never expressed with in earshot of blacks and that most whites tune out. The word "nigger" appears a lot in *Crossings*, especially in the southern section, and, subtly, Harrington describes his own vulnerability to generalizations about blacks. Told by a white man that a particular black neighborhood is too dangerous to visit, he is clutched by fear as he drives around it; then, when he begins to meet people who live there, it seems jarringly normal.

The theme that Harrington handles most awkwardly is the congeries of social ills connected with the ghetto. The awkwardness can be seen as an aspect of Harrington's success at getting inside the mind of the black middle class: the ghetto is an uncomfortable subject for it, too. Whatever occasional exasperation middle-class blacks may privately feel about the poor is overwhelmed by a sense of racial solidarity and, even more, by the suspicion that when unflattering information about poor blacks falls into the hands of whites, they use it to punish all blacks. Whites, Harrington is told again and again, don't understand the weight of historical racism that created the problems in the ghettos. Blacks can see "each black face as an individual," but whites always seem to make an immediate leap from some blacks to the entire race. Thus, to the minds of middle-class blacks, "the white brush of prejudice that tars . . . disresponsible people also tars them." White prejudice generates black self-hatred, which is perilous to all blacks and has caused many of the problems of the black poor; thus, in a closed circuit, racist attitudes produce social conditions that reinforce racist attitudes.

Avoiding the subject of the ghettos can look like a way of breaking the circuit, but if it is discussed, the essential

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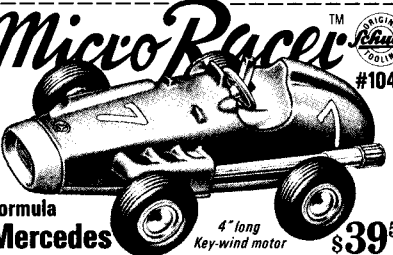
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tinderbox question is not "How bad are things?" (everybody agrees there) but "Whose fault is it?" Harrington almost always lets his considerations of ghettos fall into apportionments of blame, and then he always blames white society. He seems to feel that he lacks the standing to come down on the other side, or to avoid the intellectual trap entirely, as his black interviewees often do. For example, after touring East St. Louis with a murderer, he muses,

So much drivel comes down about how poor, city blacks have lost touch with the American values of hard work, honesty, fairness, fair play. But . . . values begin as seeds and grow from the conditions of the soil, the conditions of our lives. This simple truth has somehow come to sound smarmy. But Eskimos didn't invent air-conditioning. People like Tyron must face the world as it is, not as we who reside in virtually another country would dream it to be. As Michael Cross said about the third-grade boys I met in Detroit—the Tyrons of the future—"What do you expect?"

When he's writing about the black middle class, which is what Harrington knows intimately, he never presents people as helpless objects of oppression. Indeed, whenever he hears a defeatist bromide, such as that nothing has changed in American race relations, he disagrees—in this case insisting, convincingly, that things are better than they were a generation ago. He has the skill to capture the shadings of that truth: he is never Pollyanna-ish, he doesn't forget that much of black America is in real difficulty, and he fully communicates the continuing difficulty of the position of blacks who aren't in physical need. The overall impression of black America that Harrington creates is of a people in transition from caste to ethnic group. What he does most skillfully is evoke the poignancy of the change, without ever taking the position that it won't or shouldn't take place. There is a real love of black culture in *Crossings*, a feeling that it represents an alternative vision of American life which ought not to be wholly discarded on the road to assimilation. It's natural for even well-intentioned whites to be impatient with the black hesitation about joining white culture: why postpone success? Harrington brings that particular tangle of black emotions within range of white understanding. □

A British Original

by Pamela Petro

WRITTEN ON THE BODY
by Jeanette Winterson.
Knopf, \$20.00.

THE NARRATOR of Jeanette Winterson's new novel, *Written on the Body*, once had a girlfriend "who thought it rude to wear shorts in front of public monuments." The same narrator also had a boyfriend named Bruno who found Jesus under a wardrobe. Considering some of Jeanette Winterson's earlier creations, from a beautiful Venetian croupier with webbed feet to an evangelical child preacher with lesbian inclinations—not to forget the seventeenth-century giantess known as the Dog-Woman—her new narrator runs with pretty tame company. This is not to say that *Written on the Body* is a tame novel. Winterson has always been a sorceress with language; her slim books are packed with the stuff of speech and reflection in pure, concentrated form, undiluted with extraneous modifiers and unbothered by pleasantries like transitions. It takes courage to write with clear, unequivocal beauty, as if one's story laid bare the universal truths of fairy tales, and Jeanette Winterson has been much rewarded for her valor (perhaps this is the courage of youth, since she is only thirty-four years old). With the exception of *Boating for Beginners* (1985), a coming-of-age tale set amid Noah's preparations for the flood, which is no longer listed among her works, each of her previous publications has attracted an impressive kite-tail of awards and comments, including Gore Vidal's oft-quoted declaration that Winterson is "the most interesting young writer I have read in twenty years." *Written on the Body* is the best evidence yet to support Vidal's claim.

Winterson's earlier novels include *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1987), which she adapted for BBC television, *The Passion* (1988), and *Sexing the Cherry* (1990). In a written interview she claimed bluntly that "the story is nothing, the language is everything." And indeed it is the exceptional quality of her prose, coupled with a subversively



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erotic appreciation of the elasticity of gender, that links these highly idiosyncratic books—though readers might be apt to disagree with her about their plots, which reveal a quirky, compassionate, and erudite imagination at play. Although the sheer poetic drive of Winterson's writing can sometimes overwhelm her narrative, muscling the reader out of the story into admiration for how well she tells it, the language of *Written on the Body* cleaves like a lover to its tale. Much of the book is addressed in absentia to Louise, the narrator's true, lost love, binding voice and story in a relationship as mutual and intense as that between the characters.

What is written on the body in question is memories of a smorgasbord-style love life. The narrator, whose name and sex are never stated, is a recovering romantic getting over a quest for the "never-sleep non-stop mighty orgasm." Like a randy picaresque artist, he or she often punctuates the central story with recollections of former lovers, nine women and three men in all. There is Inge, the Dutch "anarcha-feminist" who insisted on communicating by carrier pigeon; Bathsheba, the married dentist; a woman who refused to make love on beds; and Crazy Frank, the six-foot son of midgets.

Having done with all this, the narrator settles down with Jacqueline, a nice girl who works with disturbed animals at the zoo. But their ménage proves a bit too safe, and is easily disrupted when Louise comes along. Louise is the sun at whom the narrator has looked long and without protection—less a character than a dazzling afterimage with red hair and an Australian accent. When the narrator first meets her, Louise is married to Elgin, a dull if brilliant oncologist from whom the narrator eventually learns that Louise has leukemia. Believing that it is the only way to save Louise's life, the narrator secretly exiles herself or himself to the north of England, in hopes that Louise will decide to stay with the man who might make her well.

After the narrator's departure Louise's actual death becomes a moot point; to save his or her own sanity, as well as retain the reader's interest, the narrator must translate Louise from the realm of flesh and blood into that of language and memory (it's no coincidence that the narrator works as a translator of Russian novels). Winterson accomplishes this in a disarmingly literal way, in-

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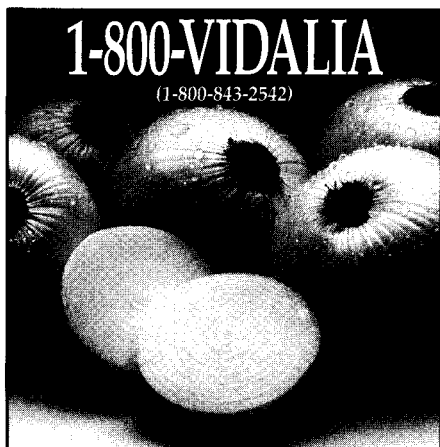
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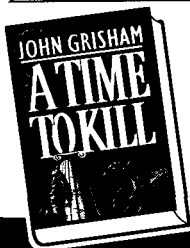


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interrupting the narrative with an onslaught of visceral memories that are prompted by a medical manual. The narrator explains:

If I could not put Louise out of my mind I would drown myself in her. Within the clinical language, through the dispassionate view of the sucking, sweating, greedy, defecating self, I found a love-poem to Louise. I would go on knowing her, more intimately than the skin, hair and voice that I craved. I would have her plasma, her spleen, her synovial fluid. I would recognise her even when her body had long since fallen away.

In hardcover the figurative remembering of Louise takes about twenty-five pages. It marks the text like a loving headstone, asking the reader to pause in respect before moving on with the narrator's life in exile, at a fancy Yorkshire wine bar called A Touch of Southern Comfort.

The sudden shifting of narrative gears is one of Jeanette Winterson's trademarks. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* the comic and harrowing upbringing of the young narrator is suspended from time to time by short fairy tales (of Winterson's invention) that serve as allegories for her passage into adulthood. This technique gets its most baroque and ambitious treatment in *Sexing the Cherry*. The novel is a veritable post-modern melting pot of narrative voices and modes, related by the gigantic Dog-Woman, a Royalist avenger in the slums of seventeenth-century London, and her adopted son, Jordan, whose own stories are interspersed with those of fairy-tale figures like the Twelve Dancing Princesses.

Sexing the Cherry plays games with time and—like all of Winterson's work—sexuality. Jordan is a naturalist and a traveler who experiences time as if it were curved like the earth, on a quest for a woman "whose face was a sea voyage I had not the courage to attempt." His mother raises dogs and murders Puritans. Threaded through their historical world are incidents of magic realism: Jordan ascends above London with a team of cleaners who scrub conversations from the sky to prevent London from being smothered by language. He surreptitiously takes home a sonnet in a wooden box as a souvenir.

Although each passage is thoroughly imagined and exquisitely written—starkling, in fact, in its originality—*Sexing*

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the *Cherry* seems an imperfect juggling act: it lacks the integration that *Written on the Body* achieves through driven, single-minded narration. And pervasive humor. Winterson's newest novel is also her funniest since *Oranges*, with which it also shares an intimate knowledge of the undertaking business.

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit tells the story of another foundling, named Jeanette (although she bestowed her own name upon the heroine, Winterson claims the story isn't autobiographical), who is raised to become an evangelical missionary by her adoptive mother, a formidable follower of a fundamentalist Christian sect in northern England. As a child Jeanette suffers endless indignities at the hands of a heathen world. In sewing class she is asked to make a sampler.

"What about SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN?" suggested Mrs. Virtue. I knew this wouldn't do for Elsie. She liked the prophets.

"No," I said firmly . . . "I was thinking of THE SUMMER IS ENDED AND WE ARE NOT YET SAVED."

Mrs. Virtue was a diplomatic woman but she had her blind spots. When it came to listing all the samplers, she wrote the others out in full, and next to mine put "Text."

As Jeanette grows older, she begins to realize that Unnatural Passions are not chemicals put in candy but feelings like those she experiences for other women. Needless to say, this wrecks the plans for her ministry, and it occasions not only a spectacular (unsuccessful) exorcism but also her eventual liberation. Undercurrents of sexual ambiguity turn up throughout Jeanette Winterson's writing. Jordan tries his hand at cross-dressing in *Sexing the Cherry*, but it is Villanelle, the web-footed heroine of *The Passion*, who is Winterson's foremost magician of gender.

Villanelle works in a Venetian casino, where sexuality is the stuff of wagers and craft: "I dressed as a boy because that's what the visitors liked to see. It was part of the game. . . ." She falls in love with a beautiful female patron but gambles her freedom and loses, winding up in Russia in the Zero Winter of 1812, where she meets Henri, a cook in Napoleon's army, who co-narrates the book. *The Passion* is a fascinating mixture of historical verisimilitude—evoked with a few deft strokes rather than with the usual baggage of dates

and details—and magic realism. Villanelle's heart, for example, is literally stolen by her lover; a gold chain is preserved inside an icicle throughout the Venetian summer. The combination works because it is filtered through language at once serious and stately, carving out a unique literary niche somewhere between fiction and myth.

Gambling is not a vice, it is an expression of our humanness.

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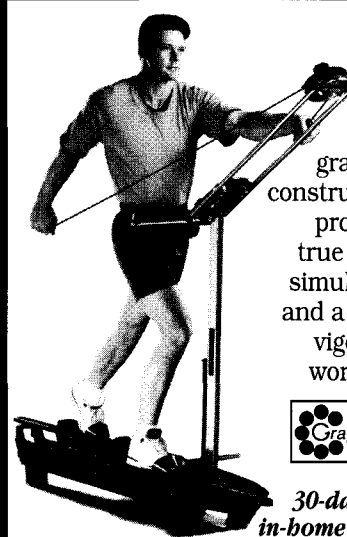
Written on the Body lacks the romantic high seriousness of *The Passion*. Winterson has toned down her penchant for magic realism and has turned her feminist fairy stories into shaggy-dog tales of domestic life. These temper the narrator's passion for Louise with wry humor, making the story all the stronger for it. The issue of gender has been refined as well—right out of the text, in fact. The nonissue of the narrator's sex quietly asks the unsettling question What does it matter? and then lets the story go on its lovely way. Notwithstanding her protests, Jeanette Winterson has once again proved to be a storyteller of compelling interest and exceptional grace. □

Brief Reviews



DIDEROT by P. N. Furbank. Knopf, \$30.00. The liberal French intellectuals of the eighteenth century, among whom Denis Diderot was an active and influential figure, had a quality seemingly lost to modern reformers. They could pursue serious objectives merrily. One generous and sympathetic hostess enticed her guests into mildly scabrous horseplay. Voltaire volleyed mischievously disconcerting opinions from his Swiss crag. Diderot himself had an impish liking for fantastic speculations and literary deceptions. Camouflage was of

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course necessary if the Encyclopedia, basically hostile to Church, State, and all received opinion, was to continue publication without being suppressed by royal censorship or, for that matter, landing editors and contributors in jail, but as Mr. Furbank describes his subject's proceedings, it is clear that Diderot enjoyed the trickery involved, for he mistrusted systems and took pleasure in rocking boats. He was the ultimate skeptic, for whom no belief, institution, or fact was immune to question. In an early work he warned the reader, "I am concerned less to instruct you than to exercise your mind. . . ." His own mind never lacked exercise. He examined philosophy and the sciences, crafts and engineering. He virtually invented art criticism. He wrote voluminously for the Encyclopedia. He wrote plays (one achieved a certain success) and drama criticism and experimental fiction foreshadowing much-later developments in the field. Mr. Furbank has dealt well with a mass of exceptionally varied material. He has successfully revived a multi-faceted, highly interesting, truly likable man whose ideas are still provocative.

DREAM HOUSE by Charlotte Nekola. Norton, \$18.95. Ms. Nekola's memoir is an attempt to understand the history of her family. Her undereducated father was "a drinking man as well as a traveling man." His wife, a college graduate with a fine academic record, was an orthodox milk, cookies, and cleanliness mother who, in her daughter's opinion, always hankered for the books she never attempted to write. (It is a bit odd that Ms. Nekola, a working author, does not consider that anyone who truly has something to write will compulsively find means to get it down. It is also odd that actual episodes of drinking by her father are never described.) On the surface the household resembled those idealized families portrayed on TV in the fifties, but "Now we know that fathers felt trapped, mothers resentful, children silenced and fearful." The author appears to have felt left out, never quite at ease with either her often absent father or her emotionally remote mother. Her sister became mentally ill, turned street nomad, and died young. Her brother withdrew into solitude. Ms. Nekola's memoir is frequently eloquent and is convincing on an emotional level. It does not account for the mis-

ery of the author and her siblings. One has the impression that something crucial has been unintentionally omitted.

ARCTIC WARS by Finn Lynge. Dartmouth/University Press of New England, \$16.95. Mr. Lynge, currently a consultant in Greenland affairs at the Danish Foreign Ministry, is a defender of the rights of native peoples anywhere. That position puts him in opposition to those enthusiasts who would starve the Inuit to save the seal, which, he points out, is not an endangered species. Mr. Lynge argues, with many statistics and some passion, that native food hunters and fur trappers never exterminate the species on which they subsist. Only commercial hunters from the industrialized world do that. He finds it ironic that what he considers sentimentalists from that industrialized world provide high salaries to the officials of animal-protection societies bent on preventing a Canadian trapper from earning a few hundred badly needed dollars by increasingly humane methods. He has a reasonable point and makes it with spirit if no great literary skill. Among other matters, he reveals that the British anti-fur organization Lynx was formerly supported by money from Gore-Tex, the manufacturer of a petrochemical fur substitute that is biologically nondegradable—as permanent a pollution as plastic. Gore-Tex eventually explained, with unexpected candor, that "early sponsorship of Lynx's activities had been motivated only by the simple wish to sell more of its own products."

THE MAN WHO WAS LATE by Louis Begley. Knopf, \$21.00. Mr. Begley's novel concerns a perpetual outsider, a son of Jewish refugees who achieves success and prominence as an expert in international finance. Ben has money, professional respect, numerous sexual affairs (some may be partly imaginary), and at least one correctly Bostonian friend left over from Harvard. The friend is the novel's narrator. He has inherited the task of sorting out Ben's private papers, and what he finds is the record of a life devoted to the pursuit of what the pursuer either did not really want or could not appreciate when it was caught. Mr. Begley's elegant prose moves the story briskly while inviting the reader's participation in literary reference and sophisticated international society. The ending, however, is slow to arrive, be-

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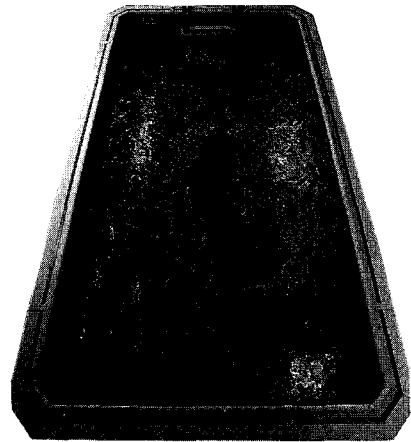
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cause it has been revealed at the start that Ben is dead and the reason he died becomes clear well before the author gets around to the details.

REVOLUTION DOWNEAST: The War for American Independence in Maine by James S. Leamon. University of Massachusetts, \$29.95. The content of Mr. Leamon's history is not exactly what the title implies. There were no great military actions in Maine, although British coastal raids no doubt struck the victims as sizable enough. At the outbreak of the fighting Maine was part of Massachusetts—in effect, the colony of a colony—sparsely settled and generally poor. There were towns that never sent representatives to Boston, because the residents could not raise the money to do so. Communication in the interior was dependent on roads where, according to John Adams, "a Wheel has never rolled from the Creation. . . ." Reliable transport was by sea, and while a few ports flourished to a modest extent, inland towns remained isolated and indigent. Mr. Leamon's history is focused on the effects of the Revolution on that situation. The war brought an exchange of ideas, interaction among towns, sometimes riotous community demonstrations, and much public discussion. Mr. Leamon describes the development of general political consciousness in an area previously divided into scattered local groupings. He also describes the postwar elaboration of pre-existent interlocking financial and political networks favoring self-serving officials and greedy entrepreneurs while leading to inequitable taxation and popular discontent. There is, it seems, little new under the sun.

MY FATHER'S SON by Farley Mowat. Davison/Houghton Mifflin, \$24.95. In the Second World War, Canada sent only volunteer groups into combat abroad. Mr. Mowat was nineteen when he volunteered for service, in 1940. His memoir of "coming of age in a world gone mad" is based on the letters he wrote to his parents during his five years with an infantry outfit irreverently known as the Hasty P. and on the letters his father wrote to him. Mowat senior—Angus—was a veteran of the First World War, an inspector of public libraries by profession, a novelist by choice, and a cheerful rule-breaker by temperament. He was also a superb correspondent, as was



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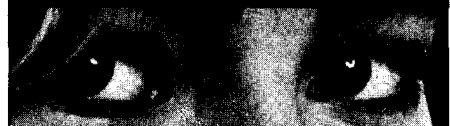
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"Greater Israel"

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In May of 1989, James Baker, declared in an address to AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) that the Jewish state should once and for all forget about "the dream of a greater Israel". It was the first time that this phrase had been heard from the lips of a Western statesman. What does it mean? Does it have any relation to reality?

What are the facts?

Stripes on the flag. Arab propaganda has it that the two stripes on the flag of Israel, above and below the star of David, represent the Nile and the Euphrates River, respectively, and signify Israel's expansionist desire to form an empire that would supposedly reach from Cairo to Baghdad. But that has no basis in fact, of course. Nowhere in any documents of the Jewish state, in any statement by even the most "radical" spokesman can any reference to anything like that be found.

Israel's Borders. "Palestine", part of the Ottoman Empire before World War I, came under British mandate after that war. The Golan Heights were part of Palestine. Israel's current borders are the result of

the 1948 War of Independence, in which six Arab armies invaded the new-born state, but were utterly defeated, and the 1967 Six-Day War, in which those same armies once again invaded Israel. In that war, Israel conquered the Gaza Strip, the vast Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. And Israel also repossessed the provinces of Judea/Samaria, (the "West Bank"), and the eastern part of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by the Jordani-

ans nineteen years earlier when they invaded the just new-born Jewish state. In order to achieve peace with Egypt, Israel returned to it all of the Sinai. Israel is and has always been prepared to grant full autonomy to the Arabs living in Judea/Samaria. It is clear to all knowledgeable in military matters that, for immutable strategic reasons, Israel cannot for any foreseeable future abandon or yield military control of Judea/Samaria and of the Golan Heights.

The Myth of Greater Israel. Israel is one of the smallest countries in the world. Most people don't realize how small it really is. One wonders whether former Secretary of State

Baker was aware of it when he uttered his memorable phrase of "Greater Israel".

A look at the map is revealing. Including the vaunted "West Bank", the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights,

Israel	France	California	Syria	Ecuador
10,840 sq. mi.	213,673 sq. mi.	160,222 sq. mi.	72,209 sq. mi.	110,688 sq. mi.



Greater Israel? It's a myth. See for yourself!

the entire area of the country is barely over 10,000 square miles. France is twenty times as large as Israel, California fifteen times as large, Syria about seven times as large, and "tiny" Ecuador ten times as large. Israel is so small that its area is less than half the size of San Bernadino County, California; if it were dropped into Lake Michigan it would disappear from sight without a trace. The Arab countries in contrast are huge—they occupy twice the area of the United States.

It is clear that the concept of "Greater Israel", lacks any validity and has no basis in fact. To apply such a concept to a country as small as Israel would almost seem a mockery. Obviously, Israel has no territorial ambitions. All it wants is to live in peace within secure and defensible borders, just as any other country and as required under U.N. Resolution No. 242. But it seems that the size of Israel, whether "greater" or "less-er" is not at all the concern of Israel's implacable Arab enemies. The very existence of Israel, of a Jewish state in their midst of whatever size, is unacceptable to the Arabs. And unless that mindset changes, not until the Arab states have become democracies and have come to full acceptance of Israel, are willing to make true peace with it, and are prepared to establish normal and friendly relations with Israel can any possible territorial adjustment be considered. As it looks right now, that may still take some time.

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his already writing-minded son. Their exchange of opinion, anecdote, affection, and complaint (they both despised what they considered their government's chicken-hearted participation in the war) makes exciting and sometimes moving reading. From the start, neither had any illusions about the difficulty of adjusting to civilian life once hostilities ceased. Angus had been through that himself, and Farley expected to encounter it. The reader gradually becomes aware, with some amusement, that neither of them had any serious notion of adjusting. To become an ordinary, average, predictable, properly money-grubbing citizen was not the Mowat way. Farley's adjustment—so far as it went or has ever gone—took the form of a self-authorized campaign to provide Canada with a complete collection of Nazi weaponry. It was a fine excuse to befuddle and defy the brass of three armies, and its telling is nothing short of hilarious.

LAST WORDS by Karl S. Guthke. Princeton, \$24.95. The opening pages of Professor Guthke's "variations on a theme in cultural history" lead one to expect a freewheeling discussion of death scenes both real and fictional. The text as a whole, however, becomes a catalogue of published collections of last words, their dates, and the social attitudes that produced them, which varied little over three centuries. The compilations were intended primarily to provide good examples of safely pious exit lines. Despite Professor Guthke's efforts to locate the odd and the unorthodox, his material remains stubbornly monotonous.

IRELAND with photographs by Tom Kelly, text by Peter Somerville-Large, and poetry by Seamus Heaney. Roberts Rinehart, \$29.95. Mr. Kelly's photographs are a fine tribute to the surviving beauty of Irish country devoid of modern intrusions, and are, with Mr. Heaney's visually precise poems, the primary purpose of this handsome book. The text is relatively brief—a guide, really, to places worth seeing, but devoid of instructions for reaching them. The only map reveals no more than that Mayo lies on the west coast and Wexford on the east. Admittedly, the arrangement provokes dreams of exploration.

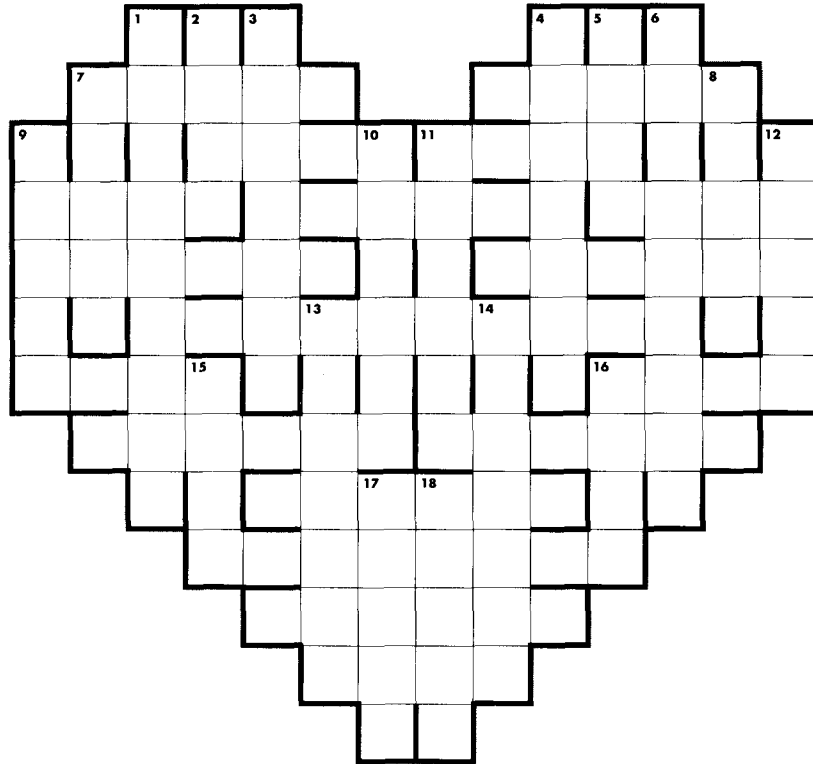
—Phoebe-Lou Adams

THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

CRYPTIC VALENTINE

The verse below was discovered in a dusty old attic trunk by one of *The Atlantic's* readers and was sent to us for analysis. When we found that the lines actually comprised 18 cryptic clues strung together, we designed the present diagram to accommodate the 18 answers as Across entries. The Downs are normal and may help solvers locate the Across words, which are clued in haphazard order in the cryptic poem. In all, answers include three proper nouns.



See page 114 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 108.

ACROSS

Here's something from the heart,
my love:

A gift on Valentine's.
I'm entertaining you at last?
O heed these lettered lines!

Fair nymph, returning tender love
Brings feelings of delight;
Neglecting to get started tells
A sentiment of spite.

Poor tiny me, more lost at sea,
Producing noises quavery:
A crazed, rejected, fallen man
Who's bonded into slavery.

O locked in prison, basely used,
Coerced to come to court!
I rue the day that I was born
In Alabama, short!

In sooth, I need your bones and back
(A flat or artsy place);
A virile man, I love as well
Your appetizing face.

Set back in sin, thou indicate
I must be looped by birds.
For lovers, art at heart is had
As part of poet's raving mad
And metaphoric words!

DOWN

1. Arab land's supporting trail guides (9)
2. Error in understanding dirge (4)
3. Hearing some corn cooked (7)
4. Badly organized in keeping one overtime (7)
5. I'm breaking record for pace of the game? (4)

6. Sap or nuts men ruined (9)
7. Bulb I put in lit repeatedly (5)
8. Black Elk's face: very thin (5)
9. Otis sloshed a Roman's port (5)
10. Sentimental American reflected on industrial town (6)
11. Notice rock star's first loves (6)
12. Brad chases school slowpoke (5)
13. People who make knives cluster in an odd way (7)
14. Hairstyle we initiated is fastened with pins (7)
15. Small tailless dog's dirt (4)
16. Appreciates living accommodations (4)
17. Illicit love affair that we have after a month (5)
18. Was a drunk in North Station? (5)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

black-water rafting *noun*, the sport of exploring caves by riding inner tubes on the rivers flowing through them: "Welcome to the flip side of white-water rafting, New Zealand-style. *Black-water rafting* takes place underground, with wet suits and headlamps" (*Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: *Black-water rafters* brave perils that include underground waterfalls and hypothermia (water temperatures in one prime spot are only around 60°F). They typically proceed by *eeling*—each grasping the legs of the person ahead—with their headlamps turned on. This keeps the group safely together while the rafters view the caves and their features—for example, the masses of glowworms within.

clutter buddy *noun*, one who supports another person in sorting and discarding accumulated personal possessions: "An opera singer returned to her Manhattan apartment, vowing to 'de-clutter.' She telephoned her *clutter-support buddy* a week later to say that, for the first time in some years, she had glimpsed the top of the coffee table. . . . The bookcase . . . came into view the next week. Again, she phoned her *clutter buddy* to report progress" (*Chicago Tribune*).

BACKGROUND: The *anti-clutter* movement of the nineties—thought by some to be a reaction to the acquisitiveness of the eighties—is manifest in

Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition (*Houghton Mifflin*). A new word that exhibits sustained use may eventually make its way into a future edition of the dictionary. The information below represents preliminary research.

clutter clinics, held at some universities; adult-education classes in *clutter management* (which have already produced some 200,000 *clutter graduates*); *clutter hot lines*; and *de-clutter guidebooks*. Those who have studied the phenomenon say that clutterers may be driven by attachment to the past, anxiety about the future, and, of course, obsession, and that chronic clutterers tend to be people on the go. *Recovering clutterers* advise others trying to kick the habit to start small: clean a small area, even if it is just twelve square inches; keep it clean; and only then go on to another spot. They also advocate giving oneself frequent—and disposable—rewards along the way.

Colombian syndrome

noun, the joining of a country's political leadership with underworld figures in a mutually advantageous relationship through which trade, law enforcement, real estate, the armed forces, and the banking system are jointly controlled: "The so-called *Colombian syndrome* is developing [in Serbia]," said Dejan Popovic, a professor at Belgrade University law school" (*Washington Post*).

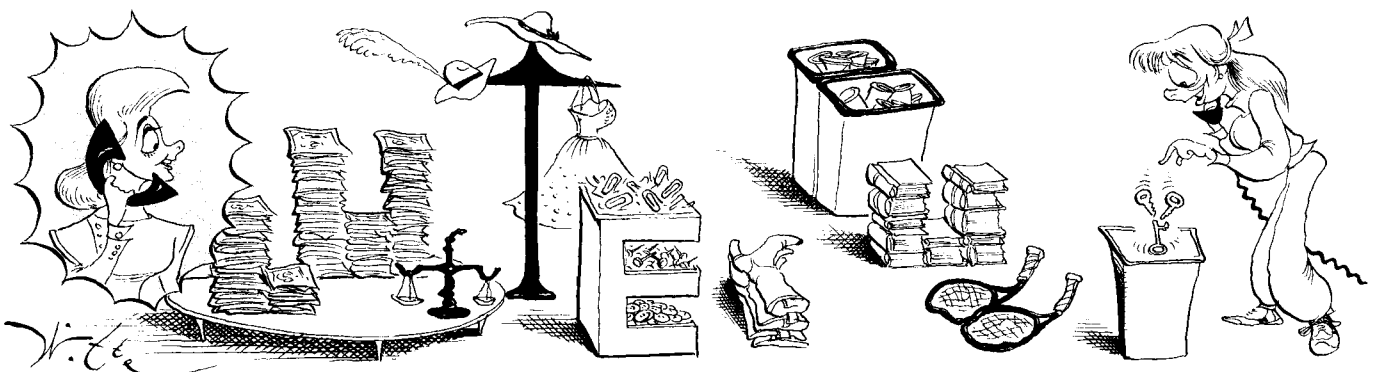
BACKGROUND: *Colombian syn-*

drome, named, of course, for the South American country, refers here to the reported link between the government of Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, and various criminals, many of whom played or are playing prominent roles in the ethnic wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to one Belgrade journalist, some 3,000 criminals from Belgrade are at the Bosnian front. They are said to be highly regarded by the Serbian government for their loyalty, courage, and imagination, and for maintaining a lucrative black market, in spite of UN-imposed sanctions, which is credited with preserving the social fabric and relative tranquility of Belgrade. The region in and around the former country of Yugoslavia has spawned a number of terms reflecting the peninsula's longstanding internecine hostilities, from *Balkanization* to the notorious *ethnic cleansing*. Two recent coinages reflect the desperate shortages of just about everything in the battle zones. The *Happy Bosnian*, or *beer bottle bomb*, is, in essence, a surface-to-air Molotov cocktail launched from an AK-47; its components include a Sarajevsko beer bottle, paint thinner, and panty hose. And the *basement-to-pent-*

house missile is made of plastic thread spools stuffed with flammable material and detonated with firecrackers.

wigger *noun*, offensive slang, a white teenager who affects the mannerisms, speech, and style of big-city and especially inner-city African-American youths. Also called *poser*, *wannabe*, *wannabe black*, *yo-boy*. "'They're black to be cool,' [Traci Wilson] says. . . . She limps around the asphalt, parodying the street strut affected by a white kid she knows. 'I say, 'Get out of my face, you're a wigger''" (*Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: *Wigger* is, of course, a hybrid of "white" and the offensive slang word "nigger." Today's white teens are not the first to embrace aspects of African-American popular culture: consider the impact of the Jazz Age and Motown. The style and voice of the hip-hopsters have been so powerful, and their reach—aided by MTV—so pervasive, that several words associated with them have already gained entry to the dictionary, including *'hood*, *homeboy*, *body popping*, and *yo*. Theories to explain the motivations of *wiggers* abound. These youths are said, variously, to be stereotyping, even caricaturing, African-Americans; engaging in a genuine search for multiculturalism and racial harmony; turning against the gentility of the suburbs in which they were raised; and simply copying their friends.



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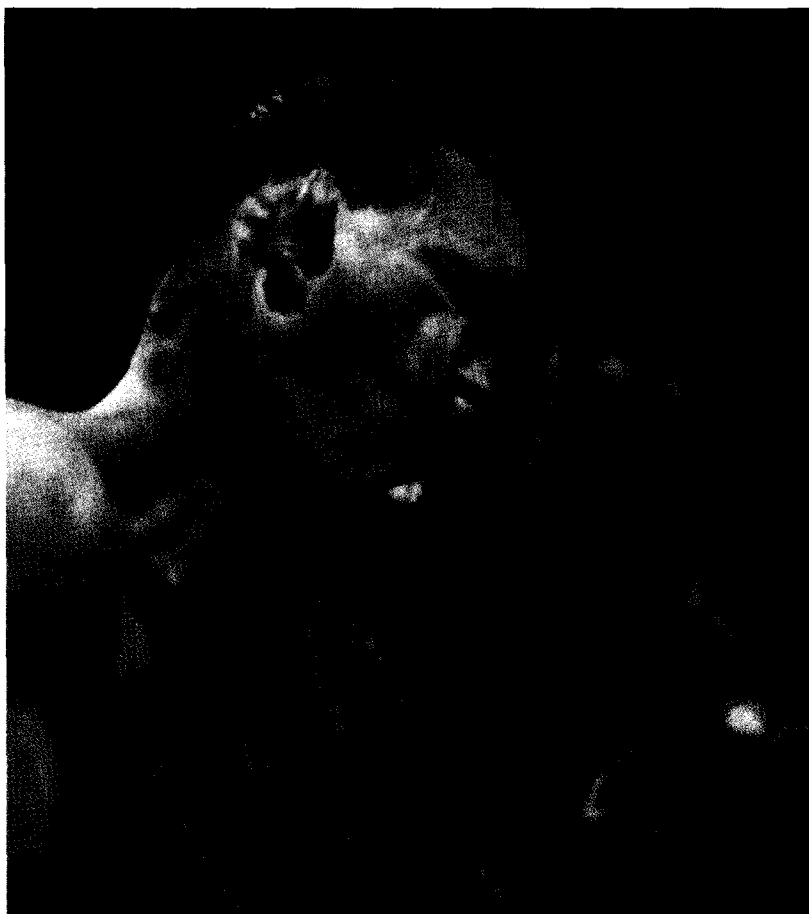
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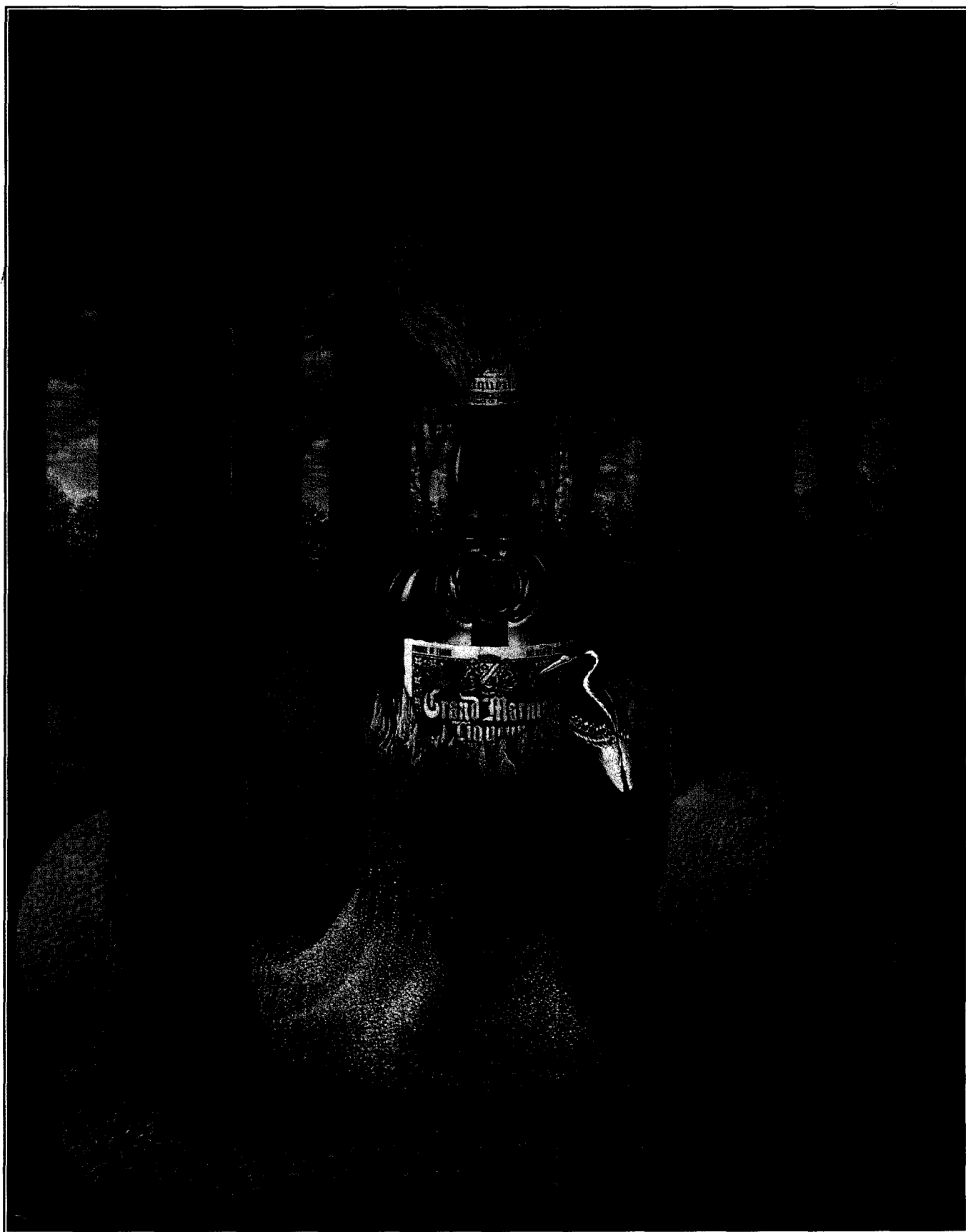
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